

Dr Jennings, Junr
1776

MEDITATIONS

AND

CONTEMPLATIONS.

In Two VOLUMES.

Containing,

VOL. I.

*Meditations among
the Tombs.
Reflections on a
Flower Garden;
And, A Descant on
Creation.*

VOL. II.

*Contemplations on
the Night.
Contemplations on
the Starry Hea-
vens; And
A Winter Piece.*

By JAMES HERVEY, A.M.



*When I consider thy Heavens the Work of thy Fingers;
the Moon and the Stars which thou hast ordained.
Lord what is Man that thou art mindful of him, and
the Son of Man that thou visitest him. Psalm VIII. v. 3 & 4.*

L O N D O N :

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63/4



V E R S E S

To Mr. HERVEY,

ON HIS

M E D I T A T I O N S.

IN these lov'd scenes what rapt'rous graces shine,
 Live in each leaf, and breathe in ev'ry line!
 What sacred beauties beam throughout the whole
 To charm the sense, and steal upon the soul!
 In classic elegance, and thoughts—his own,
 We see our faults as in a mirror shown:
 Each truth, in glaring characters exprest,
 All own the twin resemblance in their breast:
 His easy periods and persuaſive page,
 At once amend and entertain the age:
 Nature's wild fields all open to his view,
 He charms the mind with something ever new:
 On Fancy's pinions, his advent'rous soul
 Wantons unbounded, and pervades the whole:
 From death's dark caverns in the earth below,
 To spheres where planets roll, or comets glow.

See him explore, with more than human eyes,
 The dreary ſepulchre where Granville lies:
 Converſe with ſtones, or monumental braſs,
 The rude inſcriptions—or the painted glaſs:
 To gloomy vaults deſcend with awful tread,
 And view the ſilent manſions of the dead.

To gayer ſcenes he next adapts his lines,
 Where laſh nature in embroid'ry ſhines:
 The jeſs'mine groves, the woodbine's fragrant bow'rs,
 With all the painted family of flow'rs:
 There, Sachariſſa! in each fleeting grace,
 Read all the tranſient honours of thy face.

With equal dignity, now see him rise
 To paint the fable horrors of the skies :
 When all the wide horizon lies in shade ;
 And midnight phantoms sweep along the glade :
 All nature hush'd—a solemn silence reigns,
 And scarce a breeze disturbs the sleeping plains.

Last, yet not less, in majesty of phrase,
 He draws the full-orb'd moon's expansive blaze ;
 The waving meteors trembling from on high,
 With-all the mute artill'ry of the sky ;
 Systems on systems, which in order roll,
 And dart their lambent beams from pole to pole.

Hail, mighty genius ! whose excursive soul
 No bounds confine, no limits can controul :
 Whose eye expatiates, and whose mind can rove
 Thro' earth, thro' ether, and the realms above :
 From things inanimate can point * the rod,
 In just gradation to ascend to GOD.
 Taught by thy lines, see hoary age grows wise,
 And all the rebel in his bosom dies :
 E'en thoughtless youth in luxury of blood,
 Fly the infectious world, and dare—be good :
 Thy sacred truths shall reach th' impervious heart :
 Discord shall cease, Disease forget to smart :
 E'en Malice love, and Calumny commend ;
 Pride beg an alms, and Av'rice turn a friend.

Centred in CHRIST, who fires the soul within,
 The flesh shall know no pain ; the soul no sin :
 E'en in the terrors of expiring breath,
 We bless the friendly stroke, and live—in death.

Oxford, April 28, 1748.

* An allusion to the custom of shewing curious objects, and particularising their respective delicacies by the pointing of a rod.

By a PHYSICIAN.

CELESTIAL Meditant! whose ardors rise
 Deep from the tombs, and kindle to the skies;
 How shall an earthly bard's profaner string
 Resound the flights of thy seraphic wing?
 When great ELIJAH, in the fiery car,
 Flam'd visibly to heaven a living star,
 A seer remain'd to thunder what he knew,
 And with his mantle caught his spirit too.

Wit, fancy, fire, and elegance, have long
 Been lost in vicious, or ignoble song:
 Sunk from the chaste grand, the pure sublime,
 They flatter'd wealth and pow'r, or murder'd time.
 'Tis thine their devious lustre to reduce,
 To prove their noblest pow'r, their genuine use;
 From earth-born fumes to clear their tainted flame,
 And point their flight to heav'n—from whence they
 came.

O more than bard in prose! to whom belong
 Harmonious style and thought, in rhymeless song;
 Oft, by thy friendly conduct, let me tread
 The softly whisp'ring mansions of the dead:
 Where the grim form, calcining hinds and lords,
 Grins at each fond distinction pride records.
 Dumb, with immortal energy they teach;
 Lifeless, they threaten; mould'ring as they preach;
 To each succeeding age, through ev'ry clime,
 The span of life, and endless round of time:
 Hence may propitious melancholy flow,
 And safety find me in the vaults of woe.

While ev'ry virtue forms thy mental feast,
 I glow with fair sincerity at least.
 I feel (*thy face unknown*) thy heart refin'd,
 And taste, with bliss, the beauties of thy mind;
 Collecting clearly, through thy sacred plan,
 What reverence of GOD! what love to man!
 —O! when at last our deathless form shall rise,
 And flow'rs and stars desist to moralize:

Shall then my soul, by thine inform'd, survey,
 And bear, the splendors of essential day?
 But while my thoughts indulge the glorious scope,
 (My utmost worth beneath, my humblest hope),
 Conscience, or some exhorting angel, cries,
 " No lazy wishes reach above the skies,
 " Would you indeed the perfect scenes survey,
 " And share the triumphs of unbounded day ;
 " His love-diffusive life with ardor live ;
 " And die like this divine contemplative."

London, July 9, 1748.

By a PHYSICIAN.

TO form the taste, and raise the nobler part,
 To mend the morals, and to warm the heart ;
 To trace the genial source we nature call,
 And prove the God of nature friend of all ;
HERVEY for *this* his mental landscape drew,
 And sketch'd the whole creation out to view.

The enamell'd bloom and variegated flow'r,
 Whose crimson changes with the changing hour ;
 The humble shrub, whose fragrance scents the lawn,
 With buds disclosing to the early dawn ;
 The oaks that grace Britannia's mountains side,
 And spicy Lebanon's superior * pride ;
 All loudly SOV'REIGN EXCELLENCE proclaim,
 And animated worlds confess the same.

The azure fields that form th' extended sky,
 The planetary globes that roll on high,
 And solar orbs of proudest blaze, combine
 To act subservient to the great design,
 Men, angels, seraphs, join the general voice ;
 And, in the Lord of Nature, ALL rejoice.

HIS, the grey Winter's venerable guise,
 Its shrouded glories, and instructive skies † ;
 HIS, the snow's plumes, that brood the sick'ning blade ;
 HIS, the bright pendent, that impearls the glade ;
 The

* The Cedar.

† Referring to the Winter-Piece.

The waving forest, or the whisp'ring brake,
 The surging billow, or the sleeping lake.
 The SAME, who pours the beauties of the spring,
 Or mounts the whirlwind's desolating wing.
 The SAME, who smiles in nature's peaceful form,
 Frowns in the tempest, and directs the storm.

'Tis thine, bright teacher, to improve the age ;
 'Tis thine, whose life's a comment on thy page ;
 Thy happy page ! whose periods sweetly flow,
 Whose figures charm us, and whose colours glow.
 Where *artless* piety pervades the whole,
 Refines the genius, and exalts the soul.
 For let the witling argue all he can,
 It is religion still that makes the man.
 'Tis *this*, my friend, that streaks our morning bright ;
 'Tis *this*, that gilds the horrors of our night.
 When wealth forsakes us, and when friends are few ;
 When friends are faithless, or when foes pursue ;
 'Tis *this*, that wards the blow, or stills the smart ;
 Disarms affliction, or repels its dart ;
 Within the breast bids purest rapture rise ;
 Bids smiling conscience spread her cloudless skies.
 When the storm thickens, and the thunder rolls,
 When the earth trembles to th' affrighted poles ;
 The virtuous mind nor doubts nor fears assail ;
 For storms are zephyrs, or a gentler gale.
 And when disease obstructs the lab'ring breath,
 When the heart sickens, and each pulse is death ;
 E'en then religion shall sustain the just,
 Grace their last moments, nor desert their dust.

August 5, 1748.

AS some *new star* attracts th' admiring sight,
 His splendors pouring thro' the fields of light,
 Whole nights, delighted with th' unusual rays,
 On the fair heav'nly *visitant* we gaze.
 So thy fam'd *volumes* sweet surprise impart :
 Mark'd by all eyes, and felt in ev'ry heart.

Nature inform'd by thee, new paths has trod,
 And rises, *here*, a preacher for her God ;
 By Fancy's aids mysterious heights she tries,
 And lures us, by our senses, to the skies.
 'To deck thy *style* collected graces throng,
 Bold as the pencil's *tints*, yet soft as *song*.
 In themes, how rich thy vein ! how pure thy choice !
 'Transcripts of truth, own'd clear from scripture's
 voice :

Thy judgment these, and piety, attest,
 'Transcripts—read only fairer in thy breast.
There, what thy works would show, we best may see,
 And all *they* teach in doctrine, *lives* in thee.

Oh !—might they live !—Our pray'rs their strife
 engage ;

Put by fix'd languors yield us sad presage.
 In vain skill'd medicine tries her healing art :
 Disease, long foe, entrenches at thy heart.
 Yet on new labours still thy mind is prone,
 For a world's good too thoughtless of thy own.
 Active, like day's kind orb, life's course you run,
 Its sphere still glorious, tho' a *setting sun*.
 Redemption opes thee wide her healing plan,
 Health's *only* balm, her sovereign't gift to man.
 Themes sweet like these thy ardour fresh excite ;
 Warm at the soul, they nerve thy hand to write ;
 Make thy try'd virtues in their charms appear,
Patience, rais'd *hope*, from *faith* and *love* sincere ;
 Like a big constellation, bright they glow,
 And beam out lovelier by thy *night* of woe.

Known were thy merits to the public long,
 Ere own'd thus feebly in my humble song.
 Damp'd are my fires ; my heart dark cares depress ;
 A heart, too feeling from its own distress.
 Proud on thy friendship yet to build my fame,
 I gain'd my page * a sanction from *thy name*.
 Weak these returns (by gratitude tho' led)
 Where *mine* shall in thy fav'rite leaves be read.

Yet,

Yet, o'er my conscious meanness hope prevails;
Love gives me merit, where my genius fails.
 On its strong base my small desert I raise,
 Averse to flattery, as unskill'd to praise.

*Mile-end Green,
 Feb. 23, 1749.*

MOSES BROWN.

WHENCE flow these solemn sounds? this raptur'd strain?

Cherubic notes my wond'ring ear detain!
 Yet 'tis a mortal's voice: 'tis HERVEY sings:
 Sublime he soars on Contemplation's wings;
 In ev'ry period breathes ecstatic thought.
 HERVEY, 'twas Heaven thy sacred lessons taught.
 Celestial visions bless thy studious hours,
 Thy lonely walks, and thy sequester'd bow'rs.

What fav'ring pow'r dispensing sacred aids,
 Thy cavern'd cell, thy curtain'd couch pervades?
 Still hov'ring near, observant of thy themes,
 In whispers prompts thee, or inspires thy dreams?
 JESUS! effulgence of paternal light!
 Ineffably divine! supremely bright!

Whose energy according worlds attest,
 Kindled these ardors in thy glowing breast.
 We catch thy flame, as we thy page peruse;
 And faith in ev'ry object JESUS views.

We in the bloomy breathing garden trace
 Somewhat——like emanations of his grace;
 Yet must all sweetness and all beauty yield,
 Idume's grove, and Sharon's flow'ry field,
 Compar'd with JESUS: meanly, meanly shows
 The brightest lily; faint, the loveliest rose.

Divine instructor! lead thro' midnight glooms,
 To moralizing stars, and preaching tombs:
 Thro' the still void a Saviour's voice shall break,
 A ray from Jacob's star the darkness streak:

To him the fairest scenes their lustre owe ;
 His cov'nant brightens the celestial bow ;
 His vast benevolence profusely spreads
 The yellow harvests, and the verdant meads.

Thy pupil, HERVEY, a Redeemer finds :
 In boundless oceans, and in viewless winds :
 He reins at will the furious blast, and guides
 The rending tempests, and the roaring tides.
 O give, my soul, thy welfare to this trust :
 Who rais'd the world, can raise thy sleeping dust !
 He will, he will, when nature's course is run,
 'Midst falling stars, and an extinguish'd sun ;
 He will with myriads of his saints appear.
 O may I join them, tho' the meanest there !

Tho' nearer to the throne my HERVEY sings !
 Tho' I at humbler distance strike the strings ;
 Yet both shall mingle in the same employ,
 Both drink the fulness of eternal joy.

*Clerkenwell Green,
 Feb. 24, 1749-50.*

JOHN DUICK.

WHAT numbers of our race survey
 The monarch of the golden day,
 Night's ample canopy unfurl'd,
 In gloomy grandeur round the world.
 The earth in spring's embroid'ry drest,
 And ocean's ever-working breast !
 And still no grateful honours rise
 To him who spread the spacies skies,
 Who hung this air-suspended ball,
 And lives, and reigns, and shines in All !

To chase our sensual fogs away,
 And bright to pour the eternal ray
 Of Deity, inscrib'd around
 Wide nature, to her utmost bound,
 Is HERVEY's task : and well his skill
 Celestial can the task fulfil :

Ascending

Ascending from these scenes below,
 Ardent the Maker's praise to show,
 His sacred contemplations soar,
 And teach our wonder to adore.

Now he surveys the realms beneath,
 The realms of horror, and of death :
 Now entertains his vernal hours
 In flow'ry walks, and blooming bow'rs :
 Now hails the black-brow'd night, that brings
 Æthereal dews upon her wings ;
 Now marks the planets as they roll
 On burning axles round the pole :
 While *tombs*, and *flow'rs*, and *shades*, and *stars*,
 Unveil their sacred characters
 Of justice, wisdom, pow'r and love,
 And lift the soul to realms above ;
 Where dwells the God, in glory crown'd,
 Who sends his boundless influence round.
 So Jacob in his blissful dreams,
 Array'd in heav'n's refulgent beams,
 Saw from the ground a scale arise,
 Whose summit mingled with the skies :
 Angels were pleas'd to pass the road,
 The stage to earth, and path to God.
 HERVEY, proceed : for nature yields
 Fresh treasure in her ample fields ;
 And in seraphic ecstasy
 Still bear us to the throne on high.
Ocean's wide wonders next explore ;
 His changing scenes, and secret store ;
 Or let dire *Earthquake* claim thy toil,
Earthquake, that shakes a guilty isle.

So, if small things may shadow forth,
 Dear man, thy labours, and thy worth,
 The bee upon the flow'ry lawn
 Imbibes the lucid drops of dawn,
 Works them in his mysterious mould,
 And turns the common dew to gold.

London,
 May 26, 1750.

THOMAS GIBBONS.

Delightful author! whom the saints inspire!
 And whisp'ring angels with their ardors fire!
 From *youth* like mine wilt thou accept of praise?
 Or smile with candor on a stripling's lays?
 My little laurel (but a shoot at most)
 Has hardly more than one small wreath to boast.
 Such as it is—(ah! might it worthier be!)
 Its scanty foliage all is due to *THEE*.
 Oh! if amongst the honours of thy brow,
 This slender circlet may but humbly grow:
 If its faint verdure haply may find place—
 A foil to others—though its own disgrace;
 Accept it, *HERVEY*, from a heart sincere,
 And, for the giver's sake,—the tribute wear.

Thy soul-improving works perus'd, what tongue
 Can hold from praise, or check th' applausive song?
 But ah! from whence shall gratitude obtain,
 Language that may its glowing zeal explain?
 How to such wondrous worth adapt a strain? }
 Describ'd by thee, cold sepulchres can charm;
 Storms calm the soul; and freezing winter warm;
 Clear'd from her gloomy shades, we view pale night
 Surrounded with a blaze of *mental* light.
 Lo! where she comes! all silent! pensive slow!
 On her dark robe unnumber'd meteors glow!
 High on her head a starry crown she wears!
 Bright in her hand the lamp of reason bears!
 Smiling,—behold! she points the soul to heaven;
 And bids the weeping sinner be forgiven!
 But when thy fancy shifts this solemn scene,
 And ruddy morning gilds the cheerful green;
 With sudden joy we view the prospect chang'd,
 And blushing sweets in beauteous order rang'd.
 We see the violets; smell the dewy rose,
 And each perfume that from the woodbine flows.
 A boundless perspective there greets our eyes:
 Rich vales descend, and verdant mountains rise.
 The shepherd's cottages, the rural folds:
 All, that thy art describes, the eye beholds!

Amazing

Amazing limner! whence this matchless pow'r?
 Thy work's a garden—ev'ry word a flow'r!
 Thy lovely tints almost the bloom excel,
 And none but nature's self can paint so well!

Hail, holy man!—henceforth thy work shall
 stand

(Like some fair column by a master-hand,
 Which, whilst it props, adorns the tow'ring pile;))
 At once to grace and elevate our *isle*.
 Tho' simple, lofty; though majestic, plain;
 Whose bold design the rules of art restrain.
 In which the nicest eye sees nothing wrong:
 Tho' polish'd, just; and elegant, tho' strong

June 24, 1750. ST. GEORGE MOLESWORTH.

IN Pleasure's lap the muses long have lain,
 And hung, attentive, on her *Syren* strain:
 Still toils the bard beneath some weak design,
 And puny thought but halts along the line:
 Or tuneful *nothings*, stealing on the mind,
 Melt into air, nor leave a trace behind.
 While to thy rapt'rous prose, we feel, belong
 The strength of wisdom, and the voice of song:
 This lifts the torch of sacred truth on high,
 And points the captives to their native sky.

How false the joys, which earth or sense inspires;
 That clog the soul, and damp her purer fires!
 Truths, which thy solemn scenes, my friend, declare,
 Whose glowing colours paint us as we are.
 Yet not morosely stern, nor idly gay,
 Dull melancholy reigns, or trifles sway;
 Ill would the strains of levity beset,
 And sullen gloom but sadden all thy wit:
 Truth, judgment, sense, imagination join;
 And ev'ry muse, and ev'ry grace, is thine.
 Religion prompting the true end of man,
 Conspiring genius executes the plan:

Strong to convince, and elegant to charm,
 Plaintive to melt, or passionate to warm.
 Rais'd by degrees, we elevate our aim,
 And grow immortal, as we catch thy flame ;
 True piety informs our languid hearts,
 And all the vicious, and the vain, departs.
 So, when foul-spreading fogs creep slowly on,
 Blot the fair morn, and hide the golden sun ;
 Ardent he pours the boundless blaze of day,
 Rides through the sky, and shines the mist away.

O, had it been th' Almighty's gracious will,
 That I had shar'd a portion of thy skill ;
 Had this poor breast receiv'd the heav'nly beam,
 Which spreads its lustre thro' thy various theme ;
 That speaks deep lessons from the silent *tomb*,
 And crowns thy *garden* with fresh-springing bloom ;
 Or, piercing thro' *creation's* ample whole,
 Now sooth's the *night*, or gilds the *starry pole* ;
 Or marks how *Winter* calls her howling train,
 Her snows and storms, that desolate the plain ;
 With thee the muse shall trace the pleasing road,
 That leads from nature up to nature's God ;
 Humble to learn, and, as she knows, the more,
 Glad to obey, and happy to adore.

Northampton,
Aug. 25, 1750.

PETER WHALEY.

TO MISS R----- T-----.

MADAM,

THESE Reflections, the ONE on the *deepest*, the OTHER on the *gayest* scenes of Nature, when they proceeded privately from the *pen*, were addressed to a lady of the most valuable endowments; who crowned all her other endearing qualities by a fervent love of CHRIST, and an exemplary conformity to his divine pattern. She, alas! lives no longer on earth; unless it be in the honours of a distinguished character, and in the bleeding remembrance of her acquaintance.

IT is impossible, Madam, to wish you a richer blessing, or a more substantial happiness, than that the same spirit of unfeigned *faith*, the same course of undefiled *religion*, which have enabled her to triumph over death, may both animate and adorn your life. And you will permit me to declare, that my chief inducement in requesting your
acceptance

acceptance of the following Meditations, now they make a public appearance from the *press*, is, that they are designed to cultivate the same sacred *principle*, and to promote the same excellent *practice*.

LONG, Madam, may you bloom in all the vivacity and amiableness of youth, like the charming subject of one of these contemplations. But, at the same time, remember, that, with regard to such inferior accomplishments, you must one day *fade*, (may it prove some very remote period!) like the mournful objects of the other. This consideration will prompt you to go on as you have begun, in adding the *meekness* of *wisdom*, and all the *beauties* of *holiness*, to the graces of an engaging person, and the refinements of a polite education.

AND might—O! might the ensuing hints furnish you with the least assistance, in prosecuting so desirable an end; might they contribute, in any degree, to establish your faith, or elevate your devotion; they would then, administer to the author such a satisfaction,

DEDICATION. xvii

tion, as applause cannot give, nor censure take away: a satisfaction which I shall be able to enjoy, even in those awful moments, when all that captivates the eye is sinking in darkness, and every glory of this lower world disappearing for ever.

THESE wishes, Madam, as they are a most agreeable employ of my thoughts, so they come attended with this additional circumstance of pleasure, that they are also the sincerest expression of that very great esteem with which I am,

MADAM,

Your most obedient,

Most humble servant,

Weston-Favell, near
Northampton,
May 20, 1746.

JAMES HERVEY.

ADVER-

xvi D E D I C A T I O N.

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MADAM,

Your most obedient,

Most humble servant,

Weston-Favell, near
Northampton,
May 20, 1746.

JAMES HERVEY.

ADVER-

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

THIRD EDITION.

I Must intreat the purchasers of the *former* editions to excuse the freedom I have taken, in making several considerable additions to *this*. It has been done at the persuasion of some judicious friends, who apprehend the piece might be more useful, and less unworthy of the public patronage, if it touched upon some very interesting subjects, hitherto omitted. As I had no *views* but to render the performance more pleasing and serviceable; no reader, I hope, will be offended at my *practice*, or complain of it as *injurious*. Nevertheless, as I would willingly avoid whatever might seem to stand in need of an APOLOGY, I desire leave to declare, that no *future* enlargements, or alterations, shall be suffered to depreciate what, with the deepest gratitude for their past encouragement, I *now* commit to the candour of the public.

P R E F A C E.

THE first of these occasional meditations begs leave to remind my readers of their *latter end*; and would invite them to set, not their houses only, but, which is inexpressibly more needful, their souls, in order: That they may be able thro' all the intermediate stages, to look forward upon their approaching exit, without any *anxious apprehensions*: And when the great change commences, may bid adieu to terrestrial things, with all the *calmness* of a chearful resignation, with all the *comforts* of a well-grounded faith.

The other attempts to sketch out some little traces of the *all-sufficiency* of our Redeemer, for the grand and gracious purposes of everlasting salvation; that a sense of his unutterable dignity, and infinite perfections, may incite us to regard him with sentiments of the most profound *veneration*; to long for an assured interest in his merits, with all the ardency of *desire*; and to trust in his powerful mediation, with an *affiance* not to be shaken by any temptations, not to be shared with any performances of our own.

I flatter myself, that the thoughts conceived among the *tombs*, may be welcome to the *serious* and *humane* mind; because, as there are few, who have not consigned the remains of some near *relations*, or honoured *friends*, to those silent repositories; so there are none, but must be sensible, that this is the *house appointed for all living*; and that they themselves are shortly to remove into the same solemn mansions.—And who would not turn aside, for a while, from the most favourite amusements,
to

to view the *place*, where his once loved *companions* lie? Who would not sometimes survey those *apartments*, where he *himself* is to take up an *abode*, till time shall be no more?

As to the other little essay, may I not humbly presume, that the very subject itself will recommend the remarks? For, who is not delighted with the prospect of the blooming creation, and even charmed with the *delicate attractions* of flowers? Who does not covet to assemble them in the garden, or wear them in a nosegay? Since this is a passion so universal, who would not be willing to render it productive of the sublimest improvement? — This piece of *holy frugality*, I have ventured to suggest, and endeavoured to exemplify, in the second letter; that while the hand is cropping the transient beauties of a flower, the attentive mind may be enriching itself with solid and lasting good. — And I cannot but entertain some pleasing hopes, that the nicest taste may receive and relish *religious impressions*, when they are conveyed by such *lovely monitors*; when the instructive lessons are found, not on the leaves of some formidable *folio*, but stand legible on the fine *sarcenet* of a *Narcissus*; when they favour not of the *lamp* and *recluse*, but come breathing from the fragrant bosom of a *jonquil*.

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M E D I T A T I O N S

AMONG THE

T O M B S.

“ Every stone that we look upon, in this repository of past ages,
“ is both an *entertainment* and a *monitor*.”

Plain-Dealer, Vol. I, No 42.

VOL. I.

† A

M E D I T A T I O N S

AMONG THE

T O M B S.

IN a LETTER to a LADY.

MADAM,

TRAVELLING lately into *Cornwall*, I happened to alight at a considerable village in that county; where, finding myself under an unexpected necessity of staying a little, I took a walk to the *church*.* The doors, like the heaven to which they lead, were wide open; and readily admitted an unworthy stranger. Pleased with the opportunity, I resolved to spend a few minutes under the sacred roof.

In

* I had named, in some former editions, a *particular church*, viz. KILKHAMPTON; where several of the monuments, described in the following pages, *really exist*. But as I thought it convenient to mention some cases *here*, which are not, according to the best of my remembrance, referred to in any inscription *there*; I have now omitted the *name*: That *imagination* might operate more freely, and the *improvement* of the reader be consulted, without any thing that should look like a *variation* from truth and *fact*.

In a situation so retired and awful, I could not avoid falling into a train of meditations, serious and mournfully pleasing. Which, I trust, were in some degree profitable to *me*, while they possessed and warmed my thoughts; and if they may administer any satisfaction to *you*, Madam, now they are recollected, and committed to writing, I shall receive a fresh pleasure from them.

It was an *ancient pile*; reared by hands, that, ages ago, where mouldered into dust.—Situating in the *centre* of a large *burial ground*; remote from all the noise and hurry of a tumultuous life.—The body *spacious*; the structure *lofty*; the whole *magnificently plain*. A row of *regular pillars* extended themselves through the midst, and supported the roof with simplicity and with dignity.—The light that passed through the windows, seemed to shed a kind of *luminous obscurity*; which gave every object a *grave* and *venerable* air.—The *deep silence*, added to the gloomy aspect, and both heightened by the loneliness of the place, greatly increased the *solemnity* of the *scene*.—A sort of *religious dread* stole insensibly on my mind, while I advanced, all pensive and thoughtful, along the inmost isle. Such a dread as hushed every *ruder passion*, and dissipated, all the *gay images* of an alluring world.

Having adored that *Eternal Majesty*, who, far from being confined to temples made with hands, has heaven for his throne, and the earth for his footstool—I took particular notice of a handsome *altar-piece*, presented, as I was afterwards informed, by the master builders of *Stow*;* out of gratitude,

* The name of a noble seat, belonging to the late Earl of *Bath*; remarkable formerly for its excellent workmanship, and elegant furniture; once the principal resort of the quality and gentry of the west; but now demolished, laid even with the ground, and scarce one stone left upon another. So that corn may grow, or nettles spring, where *Stow* lately stood.

titude, I presume, to that gracious God, who carried them through their work, and enabled them to “bring forth their top-stone with joy.”

O! how amiable is *gratitude*! especially when it has the supreme Benefactor for its object. I have always looked upon gratitude, as the most exalted principle that can actuate the heart of man. It has something noble, disinterested, and (if I may be allowed the term) generously devout. *Repentance* indicates our nature fallen, and *prayer* turns chiefly upon a regard to one's self. But the exercises of gratitude subsisted in Paradise, when there was no fault to deplore; and will be perpetuated in heaven, when “God shall be *all in all*.”

The language of this sweet temper is “I am unspeakably obliged; what return shall I make?”—And, surely, it is no improper expression of an unfeigned thankfulness, to decorate our Creator's courts and *beautify* “the *place* where his honour dwelleth.” Of old, the habitation of his feet was glorious: Let it not now be sordid or contemptible. It must grieve an ingenuous mind, and be a reproach to any people, to have their own houses wainscotted with cedar, and painted with *vermillion*; while the temple of the Lord of Hosts is destitute of every *decent* ornament.

Here I recollected, and was charmed with *Solomon's* fine address to the Almighty, at the *dedication* of his famous *temple*. With immense charge, and exquisite skill, he had erected the most rich and finished structure, that the sun ever saw. Yet, upon a review of his work, and a reflection on the transcendant perfections of the Godhead, how he *exalts* the one, and *abases* the other!—the building was too *glorious*, for the mightiest monarch to inhabit; too *sacred*, for unhallowed feet even to enter; yet infinitely too *mean*, for the Deity to reside in. It was, and the royal worshipper acknowledged it to be, a most marvellous vouchsafement

in uncreated Excellency, "put his name there." The whole passage breathes such a *delicacy*, and is animated with such a *sublimity* of sentiment, that I cannot persuade myself to pass on without repeating it. "But will God indeed dwell on earth?" "Behold! the heaven, and heaven of heavens, cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?"*—Incomparable saying! worthy the wisest of men. Who would not chuse to possess such an elevated devotion, rather than to own all the glittering materials of that sumptuous edifice?

We are apt to be struck with admiration, at the *beautiful grandeur* of a masterly performance in *architecture*. And, perhaps, on a sight of the ancient sanctuary, should have made the superficial observation of the disciples, "What manner of stones, and what buildings are here!"—But what
a

* 1 Kings viii. 27. *But will*—A fine abrupt beginning, most significantly describing the amazement and rapture of the royal prophet's mind!—*God*: he uses no epithet, where writers of inferior discernment would have been so fond to multiply them; but speaks of the Deity, as an incomprehensible being, whose excellency is exalted above all praise.—*Dwell*: to bestow on sinful creatures a propitious look, or favour them with a transient visit of kindness, would have been an unutterable obligation: Will he then vouchsafe to fix his abode, and take up his stated residence among them?—*Indeed*: a word, in this connection, exceedingly emphatical; expressive of a condescension, wonderful and extraordinary almost beyond all credibility.—Then a most important reason is suggested for the preceding admiration: *Behold!* intimating the continued, or rather the increasing surprise of the speaker, and awaking the attention of the hearer —*Behold! the heaven*: the spacious concave of the firmament, that wide-extended azure circumference, in which worlds unnumbered perform their revolutions, is too scanty an apartment for the Godhead.—Nay, *the heaven of heavens*: those vastly higher tracts, which lie far beyond the limits of human survey, to which our very thoughts can hardly soar; even these (unbounded as they are) cannot afford an adequate habitation for JEHOVAH; even these dwindle into a point, when compared with the infinitude of his essence; even these "are as nothing before him."—*How much less* proportionate is this poor diminutive speck, which I have been erecting and embellishing, to so august a presence, to so imminent a Majesty!

a noble turn of thought, and juster taste of things, does it discover, to join with *Israel's* king, in celebrating the *condescension* of the *divine inhabitant*! That the high and lofty One, who fills immensity with his glory, should, in a peculiar manner, fix his abode there! Should *there* manifest an extraordinary degree of his benedictive presence; permit sinful mortals to approach his majesty, and promise "to make them joyful in his house of prayer!"—This should more sensibly affect our *hearts*, than the most curious arrangement of stones can delight our *eyes*.

Nay, the everlasting GOD does not disdain to *dwell* in our *souls* by his holy *Spirit*; and to make even our *bodies* his temple.—Tell me, ye that frame critical judgments, and balance nicely the distinction of things, "Is this most astonishing, or "most rejoicing?" He *humbleth* himself, the scripture assures us, even to *behold* things that are in *heaven*. * It is a most condescending favour, if HE pleases to take the least approving notice of angels and archangels, when they bow down in homage from their celestial thrones: And yet will he graciously regard, will he be united, most *intimately* united to poor, polluted, breathing dust?—O! unparalleled honour! Invaluable privilege! Be this my portion, and I shall not covet crowns, nor envy conquerors.

But let me remember, what a *sanctity of disposition*, and *uprightness of conversation*, so exalted a relation demands: Remember this, "and rejoice "with trembling."—Durst I commit any iniquity, while I tread these hallowed courts? Could the *Jewish high-priest* allow himself in any known transgression, while he made that solemn yearly entrance † into the *Holy of Holies*, and stood before the immediate presence of JEHOVAH? No, truly.

In

* Psal. cxliii. 6.

† Heb. ix. 7.

In such circumstances, a thinking person must shudder at the most remote solicitation to any wilful offence. I should now be shocked at the least indecency of behaviour, and am apprehensive of every appearance of evil.—And why do we not carry this *holy jealousy* into all our *ordinary* life? Why do we not, in every place, *reverence ourselves*;* as persons dedicated to the Divinity, as living temples of the Godhead? For, if we are real, and not merely nominal Christians, the God of glory, according to his own promise, “dwells in us, and walks in us.”—O! that this one doctrine of our religion might operate, with an abiding efficacy, upon our consciences! It would be instead of a thousand *laws*, to *regulate* our conduct; instead of a thousand *motives*, to *quicken* us in holiness. Under the influence of such a conviction, we should study to maintain a purity of intention; a dignity of action; and “to walk worthy of HIM,” who has called us to this most sacred union with his blessed Self.

The next thing, that engaged my attention, was the *lettered floor*: The pavement, somewhat like *Ezekiel's* roll, was written over from one end to the other. I soon perceived the comparison to hold good in another respect; and the *inscriptions* to be matter of “*mourning, lamentation, and woe.*”† They seemed to court my observation; silently inviting me to read them.—And what would these dumb monitors inform me of?—“That, beneath their
“ little

* ————— παντων δε μαλιστα αιχυνεο σ' αυτον,
was the favourite maxim of *Pythagoras*, and supposed to be one of the best moral precepts ever given to the Heathen world. With what superior force and infinite advantage does the argument take place in the Christian scheme! Where we are taught to regard ourselves, not merely as *intellectual beings*, who have *reason* for our monitor; but as *consecrated creatures*, who have a God of the most consummate perfection ever *with us*, ever *in us*.

† 2 Cor. vi. 16.

‡ Ezek. ii. 10.

“ little circumferenes, were deposited such and
 “ such *pieces of clay*, which once *lived*, and *moved*,
 “ and *talked*: That they had received a charge to
 “ preserve their names, and were the remaining
 “ trustees of their memory.”

Ah! said I, is such my situation? The adorable Creator around me, and the bones of my fellow-creatures under me! Surely, then, I have great reason to cry out, with the revering Patriarch, “ How dreadful is this place!” * Seriousness and devotion become this house for ever. May I never enter into it lightly or irreverently; but with a profound awe, and godly fear!

“ O! that they were wise!” † said the inspired penman. It was his last wish for his dear people: He breathed it out, and gave up the ghost.—But what is wisdom? It consists not in refined speculations; accurate researches into nature; or an universal acquaintance with history. The divine law-giver settles this important point in his next aspiration: “ O! that they understood this!” That they had right apprehensions of their spiritual interests, and eternal concerns! that they had eyes to discern, and inclinations to pursue the things which belong to their peace!—But how shall they attain this valuable knowledge? I send them not, adds the illustrious teacher, to turn over all the volumes of literature: they may much more expeditiously acquire this science of life, by “ considering their latter end.” This *spark* of heaven is often lost, under the *glitter* of pompous crudition; but shines clearly in the gloomy mansions of the tomb. Drowned in this gentle *whisper*, amidst the *noise* of secular affairs, but speaks distinctly in the retirements of serious contemplation.—Behold! how providentially I am brought to the *school* of

* Gen. xxviii. 17.

† Deut. xxxii. 29.

of *wisdom* ! * The grave is the most faithful † master ; and these instances of mortality, the most instructive lessons.—Come then, *calm attention*, and compose my thoughts ; Come, thou *celestial Spirit* ; and enlighten my mind, that I may so peruse these awful pages, as to “ become wise unto salvation.”

Examining the records of mortality, I found the memorials of a ‡ *promiscuous multitude*. They were *buddled*, at least they *rested* together, without any regard to *rank* or *seniority*. None were ambitious of the uppermost rooms, or chief seats in this house of mourning. None entertained fond and eager expectations of being honourably greeted in their darksome cells. The *man* of years and *experience*, reputed as an oracle in his generation, was content to lie down at the feet of a *babe*. In this house appointed for all living, the *servant* was equally accommodated, and lodged in the same story, with his *master*. The *poor indigent* lay as softly, and slept as soundly, as the most *opulent possessor*. All the distinction that subsisted was a grassy hillock, bound with osiers ; or a sepulchral stone, ornamented with imagery.

Why then, said my working thoughts, Oh ! why should we raise such a mighty stir about *superiority* and *precedence*, when the next remove will reduce us all to a state of *equal meanness* ? Why should

- * The man how wise, who, sick of gaudy scenes,
Is led by choice to take his favourite walk
Beneath death's gloomy, silent, cypress shades,
Unpierc'd by vanity's fantastic ray ?
To read his monuments, to weigh his dust,
Visit his vaults, and dwell among the tombs.

Night Thoughts.

† Wait the great teacher death.

Pope.

‡ *Missa serum ac juvenum densantur funera.*

Hor.

Thus age and youth promiscuous croud the tomb.

should we exalt ourselves, or debase others; since we must all one day be upon a common level, and blended together in the same undistinguished dust? Oh! that this consideration might humble my own, and others pride; and sink our *imagination*s as low, as our *habitation* will shortly be!

Among these confused reliicks of humanity, there are, without doubt, persons of *contrary interests*, and *contradicting sentiments*: But death, like some able dayfman, has laid his hand on the contending parties, and brought all their differences to an* amicable conclusion. Here enemies, *sworn enemies*, dwell together in *unity*. They drop every imbittered thought, and forget that they once were *foes*. Perhaps, their crumbling bones mix, as they moulder: And those who, while they lived, stood aloof in irreconcilable variance; here fall into mutual embraces, and even incorporate with each other in the grave—Oh! that we might learn from these friendly ashes, not to perpetuate the *memory of injuries*; not to foment the *fever of resentment*; nor cherish the *turbulence of passion*: That there may be as little animosity and disagreement in the land of the living, as there is in the congregation of the dead!—But I suspend for a while such *general* observations, and address myself to a more *particular* enquiry.

Yonder *white stone*, emblem of the innocence it covers, informs the beholder of one, who breathed out its tender soul almost in the instant of receiving it.—There the peaceful *infant*, without so much as knowing what labour and vexation mean, “lies
“still

* *Hi motus animorum, atque hæc certamina tanta,
Pulveris exigui jactu compressi quiscent.*

Virg.

Yet all those dreadful feuds, this deadly fray,
A cart of scatter'd dust will soon allay.

"still and is quiet; it sleeps and is at rest."* Staying only to wash away its native impurity in the laver of regeneration, it bid a speedy adieu to time, and terrestrial things.—What did the little hasty sojourner find, so forbidding and disgustful in our upper world, to occasion its precipitant exit? 'Tis written, indeed, of its suffering Saviour, that when he had tasted the vinegar mingled with gall, he would not drink:† And, did our new-come stranger begin to sip the cup of life; but, perceiving the *bitterness*, turn away its head, and refuse the draught? Was this the cause, why the wary babe only opened its eyes; just looked on the light; and then withdrew, into the more inviting regions of undisturbed repose?

O! happy voyager! that wast no sooner *launched* than *arrived* at the *haven*! ‡—But more happy *they*, who have passed the waves, and weathered all the storms, of a troublesome and dangerous world! who, "through many tribulations, have entered "into the kingdom of heaven;" and thereby brought *honour* to their divine convoy, administered *comfort* to the companions of their toil; and left an instructive *example* to succeeding pilgrims.

O, highly favoured probationer! *accepted* without being *exercised*! It was thy peculiar privilege, not to feel the slightest of those evils which oppress thy surviving kindred; which frequently fetch groans from the most manly fortitude, or most elevated faith. The arrows of *calamity* barbed with anguish, are *often* fixed deep in our choicest comforts. The fiery darts of *temptation*, shot from the hand of hell, are always flying in showers around
our

* Job iii. 13.

† Matth xxvii. 34.

‡ Happy the babe, who, privileg'd by fate
To shorter labour and a lighter weight,
Receiv'd but yesterday the gift of breath,
Order'd to-morrow to return to death.

Prior's Sol.

our integrity. To thee, sweet babe, both these distresses and dangers were alike unknown.

Consider this, ye *mourning parents*, and dry up your tears. Why should you lament, that your little ones are crowned with victory, before the sword is drawn or the conflict begun? Perhaps the Supreme Disposer of events foresaw some inevitable *snare of temptation* forming, or some dreadful *storm of adversity* impending. And why should you be so dissatisfied with that *kind precaution*; which housed your pleasant plant, and removed into shelter a tender flower, before the thunders roared; before the lightnings flew; before the tempest poured its rage?—O remember they are not *lost*, but *taken away from the evil to come*. *

At the same time, let *survivors*, doomed to bear the heat and burden of the day, reflect for their encouragement,—that it is more honourable to have entered the lists, and to have fought the good fight before they come off conquerors. They who have bore the cross, and submitted to afflictive providences, with a cheerful resignation; have girded up the loins of their mind, and performed their master's will, with an honest and preserving fidelity: These, having glorified the Redeemer on earth, will, probably, be as *stars of the first magnitude* in heaven. They will shine with brighter beams, be replenished with stronger joys in their LORD's everlasting kingdom.

Here lies the grief of a fond mother, and the blasted expectation of an indulgent father. The youth grew up, like a well watered plant; he shot deep, rose high, and bid fair for manhood: but just as the cedar began to tower, and promised ere long to be the pride of the wood, and prince among the neighbouring trees;—behold! the ax is laid
unto

* Isaiah lvii. 1.

unto the root; the fatal *blow* struck; and all its *branching honours* tumbled to the dust. And did he fall alone? O! no: the hopes of his father that begat him, and the pleasing prospects of her that bare him, fell, and were crushed together with him.

Doubtless it would have pierced one's heart, to have beheld the tender parents, following the breathless youth, to his long home, perhaps, drowned in tears, and all overwhelmed with sorrows, they stood, like weeping statues, on this very spot.—Methinks I see the deeply distressed mourners attending the sad solemnity: How they wring their hands, and pour floods from their eyes!——Is it fancy? or do I really hear the passionate mother, in an agony of affliction, taking her final leave of the darling of her soul? Dumb she remained, while the awful obsequies were performing; dumb with grief, and leaning upon the partner of her woes. But now the inward anguish struggles for vent; it grows too big to be repressed. She advances to the brink of the grave. All her soul is in her eyes. She fastens one more look upon the *dear doleful object*, before the pit shuts its mouth upon him. And as she looks she cries;——in broken accents, interrupted by many a rising sob, she cries,—“Farewel, my son! my son! my only “beloved! Would to GOD I had died for thee; “Farewel, my child! and farewel, all my earthly “happiness!——I shall never more see good in “the land of the living.—Attempt not to comfort “me.—I will go mourning all my days, till my “grey hairs come down with sorrow, to the grave.”

From this affecting representation, let parents be convinced, how highly it concerns them to *cultivate the morals, and secure the immortal interests* of their children. If you really love the offspring of your own bodies; if your bowels yearn over those amiable pledges of conjugal endearment; O! spare
no

no pains ; give all diligence, I entreat you, to “ bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the “ LORD.” Then, may you have joy in their life, and consolation in their death. If their *span is prolonged* ; their unblameable and useful conduct will be the staff of your age, and a balm for declining nature. Or, if the number of their years be *cut off* in the *midst*, you may commit their remains to the dust, with much the same comfortable expectations, and with infinitely more exalted views, than you send the survivors to places of genteel education. You may commit them to the dust, with cheering hopes of receiving them again to your arms inexpressibly improved in every noble and endearing accomplishment.

’Tis certainly a severe trial ; and much more afflictive, than I am able to imagine ; to resign a lovely blooming creature, sprung from your own loins, to the gloomy *recesses* of *corruption* : After having been long dandled upon your knees ; united to your affections by a thousand ties of tenderness ; and now become both “ the delight of your eyes,” and the support of your family : To have such an one torn from your bosom, and thrown into darkness, doubtless it must be like a dagger in your hearts.— But O ! how much more cutting to you, and confounding to the child, to have the soul separated from God ; and for *shameful ignorance* or *early impiety*, consigned over to places of eternal torment ! How would it aggravate your distress, and add a *distracting emphasis* to all your sighs, if you should follow the pale corpse with these bitter reflections ! —“ This dear creature, though long ago capable “ of knowing good from evil, is gone *out* of the “ world, before it had learned the great design “ of coming *into it*. A short lived momentary “ existence, it received from me ; but no good instructions, no holy admonitions, nothing to further its well-being in that everlasting state up-
“ on

“ on which it is now entered. The *poor body* is
 “ consigned to the coffin, and carried out to con-
 “ sume away, in the cold and silent grave. And
 “ what reason have I to suppose that the *precious*
 “ *soul* is in a better condition? May I not justly
 “ fear that, sentenced by the righteous judge, it is
 “ going, or gone away, into the pains of endless
 “ punishment?—Perhaps while I am *bewailing*
 “ its untimely *departure*; it may be *curving* in utter
 “ darkness, that ever to be deplored, that most ca-
 “ lamitous *day*, when it was born of such a careless,
 “ ungodly parent as I have been.”

Nothing, I think, but the gnawings of that worm which never dies can equal the anguish of these self-condemning thoughts. The *tortures of a rack* must be an easy suffering compared with the *stings and horror* of such a *remorse*.—How earnestly do I wish, that, as many as are entrusted with the management of children, would take timely care to prevent these intolerable scourges of conscience; by endeavouring to conduct their minds into an early knowledge of Christ, and a cordial love of his truth!

On this hand is lodged one, whose sepulchral stone tells a most pitiable tale indeed! Well may the *little images* reclined over the sleeping ashes, hang down their heads with that *pensive air*! None can consider so mournful a story, without feeling some touches of sympathizing concern.—His *age* twenty-eight; his death *sudden*; himself cut down in the *prime* of life, amidst all the vivacity and vigour of *manhood*; while “ his breasts were full of
 “ milk, and his bones moistened with marrow.”
 —Probably, he entertained no apprehensions of the evil hour: And indeed who could have suspected, that so bright a *sun* should go down at *noon*? To human appearance, his hill stood strong: Length of days seemed written in his sanguine coun-
 tenance.

tenance. He solaced himself with the prospect of a long, long series of earthly satisfactions.—When lo, an unexpected stroke descends! descends from that mighty arm, which “overturneth the mountains by their roots: and crushes the imaginary hero, *before the moth* ;” * as quickly, and more easily, than our fingers press such a feeble fluttering insect to death.

Perhaps the *nuptial joys* were all he thought on.—Were not such the breathings of his enamoured soul? “Yet a very little while and I shall possess the utmost of my wishes: I shall call my charmer mine; and, in *her*, enjoy whatever my heart can crave.”—In the midst of such enchanting views, had some faithful friend but softly reminded him of an opening grave, and the end of all things: How *unseasonable*, would he have reckoned the admonition; and how *impertinent*, the person that administered it! Yet, though all warm with life, and rich in visionary bliss, he was even then tottering upon the brink of both.—O! dreadful vicissitude! to have the *bridal festivity* † turned into

* Job iv. 19. לפני עש — *Ad instar, ad modum Tinea*.—I retain this interpretation, both as it is most suitable to my purpose, and as it is patronized by some eminent commentators; especially the celebrated *Schultens*. Though I cannot but give the preference to the opinion of a judicious friend, who would render the passage more literally, “Before the face of a moth:” making it to represent a creature so exceedingly frail, that even a moth flying against it, may dash it to pieces.—Which, besides its closer correspondence with the exact import of the *Hebrew*, presents us with a much finer image of the most extreme imbecility. For it certainly implies a far greater degree of weakness, to be crushed by the feeble flutter of the feeblest creature, than only to be crushed as easily as that creature by the hand of man.—The *French* version is very expressive and beautiful, *a la rencontre d'un vermineau*.

† A distress of this kind is painted in very affecting colours by Pliny, in an epistle to Marcellinus:—*O triste plane acerbunque funus! O morte i, sa mortis tempus indignius! Jam destinata erat egregio juveni; jam electus nuptiarum dies; jam nos advocati. Quod gaudium quo mærore mutatum est! Non possum exprimere verbis, quantum animo vulnus acceperim, quum audiivi Fundanum ipsum ut multa*

into the *funeral solemnity*. O! deplorable misfortune! to be shipwrecked even in the haven! and perish in sight of happiness!—What a memorable proof is here of the *frailty of man* in his *best estate*! look, O, look on this monument, ye gay and *careless*! attend to this date; and boast no more of to-morrow!

Who can tell, but the *bride-maids*, girded with gladness, had prepared the marriage-bed? had decked it with the richest covers, and dressed it in pillows of down? When—Oh! trust not in youth, or in strength, or in any thing mortal; for there is nothing certain, nothing to be depended on, beneath the unchangeable GOD—Death, relentless death, is making him another kind of bed in the dust of the earth. Unto this he must be conveyed, not with a splendid procession of *joyous attendants*; but stretched in the *gloomy hearse*, and followed by a train of mourners. On this he must take up a lonely lodging, nor ever be released, “till the heavens are no more.”—In vain does the *consenting fair one* put on her ornaments and expect her spouse. Did she not, like *Sifera’s* mother, look out of the lattice; chide the delays of her beloved; and wonder “why his chariot was “so long in coming?” Little thinking, that the *intended bridegroom* had for ever done with transitory things! That now everlasting cares employ his mind, without one single remembrance of his lovely

multa luctuoso, dolor invenit) precipientem, quod in vestes, margaritas, gemmas, fuerat erogaturus, hoc in thura, et unguenta, et odores impenderetur. Plin. lib. v. epist. 16.

“A loss infinitely severe! and more severe by the particular conjuncture in which it happened! she was contracted to a most worthy youth; the wedding day was fixed, and we were all invited. How sad a change, from the highest joy to the deepest sorrow! how shall I express the wound that pierced my heart, when I heard Fundanus himself (as grief is ever finding out circumstances to aggravate its affliction) ordering the money he had designed to lay out upon cloaths and jewels for her marriage, to be employed in myrrh and spices for her funeral.”

lovely *Lucinda*!—Go, disappointed virgin; Go, mourn the *uncertainty* of all *created* bliss! Teach thy soul to aspire after a sure and *immutable* felicity! For the once gay and gallant *Fidelio* sleeps in other embraces; even in the icy arms of death! forgetful, eternally forgetful, of the world—and *thee*.

Hitherto, one is tempted to exclaim against the *king of terrors*, and call him *capriciously cruel*. He seems, by beginning at the wrong end of the register, to having inverted the laws of nature. Passing over the couch of decrepit age, he has nipped *infancy* in its *bud*; blasted youth in its *bloom*; and torn up *manhood* in its full *maturity*.—Terrible indeed are those providences, yet not unsearchable the counsels:

“ For us they sicken, and for us they die.” *

Such strokes must not only *grieve* the *relatives*, but *surprise* the whole *neighbourhood*. They sound a powerful alarm to heedless dreaming mortals, and are intended as a *remedy* for our *carnal security*. Such passing bells, inculcate loudly our LORD's admonition; “ Take ye heed, watch, and pray: for “ ye know not when the time is.”——We *not* like intoxicated creatures, upon the very *verge* of a tremendous *precipice*. These astonishing dispensations, are the kind messengers of heaven; to *rouse* us from our *supineness*, and quicken us into timely circumspection. I need not, surely accommodate them with language, nor act as their interpreter. Let every one's conscience be awake, and this will appear their awful meaning—“ O! ye sons of men, “ in the midst of life you are in death. No state, “ no circumstances, can ascertain your preservation a single moment. So *strong* is the tyrant's “ arm,

“ arm, that nothing can resist its force ; so *unerring*
 “ his aim, that nothing can elude the blow : *Sudden* as lightning, sometimes, is his arrow launched ; and wounds and kills, in the twinkling of an
 “ eye. Never promise yourselves safety in any expedient, but constant preparation. The fatal
 “ shafts fly so promiscuously, that none can guess
 “ the next victim. Therefore, “ be ye always
 “ ready ; for in such an hour as ye think not, *the*
 “ *final summons cometh.*”

“ Be ye always ready : for in such an hour as ye
 “ think not.”—Important admonition ! Methinks, it reverberates from sepulchre to sepulchre ; and addresses me with line upon line, precept upon precept.—The reiterated warning, I acknowledge, is too needful ; may co-operating grace, render it effectual ! The momentous truth, though worthy to be *engraved* on the tables of a most *tenacious* memory ; is *slightly sketched* on the transient flow of passion. We see our neighbours fall ; we turn pale at the shock ; and feel, perhaps, a trembling dread. No sooner are they removed from our sight ; but, driven in the whirl of business or lulled in the languors of pleasure, we forget the providence, and neglect its errand. The impression made on our unstable minds, is like the trace of an arrow through the penetrated air ; or the path of a keel, in the furrowed wave.—Strange stupidity ! To cure it, another monitor bespeaks me from a neighbouring stone. It contains the narrative of an unhappy mortal, *snatched* from his friends, and *hurried* to the awful bar ; without leisure, either to take a *last farewell* of the one, or to put up so much as a *single prayer* preparatory for the other : Killed, according to the usual expression, by a sudden stroke of *casualty*.

Was it then a random stroke ? Doubtless, the blow came from an *aiming*, though invisible *hand*, God presideth over the armies of heaven ; God ruleth

ruleth among the inhabitants of the earth; and God conducteth what men call *chance*. Nothing, nothing comes to pass through a blind and undiscerning fatality, if accidents happen; they happen according to the exact foreknowledge, and conformably to the determinate counsels of eternal Wisdom. The LORD, with whom are the issues of death, signed the *warrant*, and gave the high *commission*: The seemingly fortuitous *disaster* was only the *minister* appointed to execute the supreme decree. When the impious monarch was mortally wounded, it seemed to be a casual shot, "A certain man drew a bow at a venture."*—*At a venture*, as he thought: but his hand was strengthened, by an omnipotent aid; and the shaft levelled, by an unerring eye. So that, what we term *casualty*, is really *providence*; accomplishing deliberate designs, but concealing its own interposition.——How comforting this reflection! How admirably adapted to sooth the throbbing anguish of the mourners, and compose their spirits into a quiet submission! How excellently suited, to dissipate the fears of godly survivors, and create a calm intrepidity even amidst innumerable perils!

O! how *thin* is the *partition*, between this world and another! How *short* the *transition*, from time to eternity! The partition, nothing more than the breath in our nostrils; and the transition may be made, in the twinkling of an eye.——Poor *Chrymelus*, I remember, arose from the diversion of a card table, and dropt into the dwellings of darkness——One night, *Corina* was all gaiety in her spirits, and finery in her apparel, at a magnificent ball: The next night, she lay pale and stiff, an extended corpse, and ready to be mingled with the mouldering dead.——Young *Atticus* lived to see his ample and commodious seat completed: But
not

* 1 Kings xxii. 34.

not to spend one joyous hour under the stately roof. The shades were hung, to admit the day; but the master's eyes are closed in endless night. The chambers were furnished, to invite repose; but their lord rests in the lower parts of the earth. The gardens were planned, and a thousand elegant decorations designed; but alas! their intended possessor, is gone down to "the place of skulls:" gone down to the valley of the shadow of death.

While I am *recollecting*, many, I question not, are *experiencing*, the same trivial vicissitude. The eyes of that sublime Being,—who sits upon the circle of the earth, and views all its inhabitants with one comprehensive glance,—even now behold many tents in affliction: Such affliction, as overwhelmed the *Egyptians* in that fatal night, when the destroying angel sheathed his arrows in all the pride of their strength——Some, sinking to the floor from their *easy chair*; and deaf even to the most piercing shrieks of their distracted relations.——Some, giving up the ghost, as they are reclined, all alone, under the *shady arbour*, to taste the sweets of the flowery scene——Some, as they sail, associated with a *party of pleasure*, along the silver stream, while wine and music flow around.——Some *intercepted*, as they are returning home; and some *interrupted*, as they enter upon an important negotiation.——Some arrested with the *gain of injustice* in their hands: and some surprised, in the immediate act of *lewdness*, or of *cruelty*.

Legions, legions of disasters, such as no prudence can foresee, no care prevent, lie in wait to accomplish our doom. A *starting horse* may throw his rider, and at once dash his body against the stones, and fling his soul into the invisible world. A *stack of chimneys* may tumble into the street, and crush the unwary passenger under the ruins; or even a *tile*, dropping from the roof, may be as fatal as the falling of the whole structure.——So frail,

so very attenuated is the *thread* of life, that it not only bursts before the *storm*, but breaks even at a *breeze*. The most common occurrences, those, from which we suspect not the least harm, may prove the weapons of our destruction. A grape-stone, a despicable fly, may be more mortal than *Goliath*, with all his formidable armour.——Nay, if GOD give command, our very *comforts* become *killing*. The air we breathe is our bane: And the food we eat, the vehicle of death.——That last enemy has unnumbered avenues for his approach. Yea: lies intrenched in our very bosom, and holds his fortress even in the seat of our life. The crimson fluid, which *distributes health*, is impregnated with the *seeds of death*.* Some unseen impediment may obstruct its passage, or some unknown violence may divert its course; in either of which cases, it acts the part of a poisonous draught, or a deadly stab. The body is a *delicately fine* machine; consisting of ten thousand parts, playing ten thousand motions; and a very *small pin* taken out, may disconcert the whole frame: a *single wheel* clogged, may put a stop to all the vital movements.

Since then we are so liable to be dispossessed of our earthly tabernacle, let us look upon ourselves only as *tenants at will*; and hold ourselves in perpetual readiness, to depart at a moment's warning. Without such an *habitual* readiness, we are like wretches that sleep on the top of a mast, while a horrid gulph yawns, or furious waves rage below. And where can be the peace; what the satisfaction, of such a state?——Whereas, a prepared condition will inspire a chearfulness of temper, not to be ruffled by every low vexation; and create a firmness

* As man, perhaps, the moment of his breath,
Receives the lurking principle of death,
The young disease, that must subdue at length,
Grows with his growth, and strengthens with his strength.

Pope's *Ethics*.

firmness of mind, not to be overthrown by the most threatening dangers. When the *city* is fortified with walls, furnished with provisions, guarded by able and resolute troops; what have the *inhabitants* to fear? what may they not enjoy? So, just so, or rather by a *much surer* band, are connected the *real* taste of life, and the *constant* thought of death.

I said, “our very comforts may become killing.”
 —And see the truth inscribed by the hand, sealed with the signet, of fate. The marble, which graces yonder pillar, informs me, that, near it, are deposited the remains of my valuable friend *Sophronia*; who *died in childbed*.—How often does this calamity happen! The branch shoots; but the stem withers. The babe springs to light; but she that bare him, breathes her last. She gives life, but (O pitiable consideration!) gives it at the expence of her own; and becomes at once, a *mother* and a *corpse*——Or else, perhaps, she expires in severe pangs, and is herself a tomb for her infant; while the melancholy complaint of a monarch’s woes, is the epitaph for them both: “The children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth.”*—Less to be lamented, in my opinion, *this* misfortune than the *other*. Better, for the tender stranger, to be stopped in the porch; than to enter, only to converse with affliction. Better to find a grave in the womb; than to be exposed on a hazardous world, without the guardian of its infantile years, without the faithful guide of its youth.

The monument is distinguished by its finer materials, and more delicate appendages. It seems to have taken its model from an affluent hand; directed by a generous heart; which thought it could
 never

* Isaiah xxxvii. 3.

never do enough for the deceased.—It seems, also to exhibit an *emblematical picture of Sophronia's* person and accomplishments. Is her beauty, or, what is *more* than beauty, her white robed innocence, represented by the *snowy colour*? The *surface* smoothly polished, like her amiable temper, and engaging manners: The *whole* elegantly adorned, without either extravagant pomp, or sordid negligence: like her undissembled goodness, remote from the least ostentation, yet in all points exemplary—But, ah! how vain, were all these endearing charms! How vain, the lustre of thy sprightly eye! How vain, the bloom of thy bridal youth! How vain, the honours of thy superior birth! How *unable* to *secure* the lovely possessor, from the *savage violence* of death!—How ineffectual, the universal esteem of thy acquaintance; the fondness of thy transported husband; or even the spotless integrity of thy character; to prolong thy span, or procure thee a short reprieve!—The concurrence of all these circumstances, reminds me of those beautiful and tender lines,

“ How lov'd, how *valu'd* once, avails Thee not;

“ To whom related, or by whom begot.

“ A heap of dust alone remains of Thee:

“ 'Tis all THOU art!—and all the PROUD
shall be!” *

Pope's *Miscell.*

Yet,

* These verses are inscribed on a small, but very elegant monument, lately erected in the great church at Northampton; which, in the *hieroglyphical* decorations, corresponds with the description introduced on this subject: and particularly, that it is dedicated to the memory of an *amiable* woman, Mrs. ANNE STONHOUSE; the excellent wife of my *worthy* friend Dr. STONHOUSE: who has had the distress to see all the efforts of that *healing* art, to which I, and so many others, have been *greatly* indebted, failing in their attempts to preserve a life *much dearer* to him than his own.

Nec profunt domino, quæ profunt omnibus, artes. Ovid.

No longer his all-healing art avails,
But ev'ry remedy its master fails.

Yet, though unable to divert the stroke, Christianity is sovereign to pluck out the sting of death.

Is

He has, however, sought some consolation, in the midst of his *tender* anguish, by teaching the sepulchral marble to speak, at once, his esteem for *her memory*; and his veneration for *that religion* which she so eminently adorned; by summing up her character in that concise, but comprehensive sentence, A SINCERE CHRISTIAN. Concise enough to be the motto for a mourning-ring, yet as *comprehensive* as the most enlarged sphere of personal, social, and religious worth. For, whatsoever things are pure; whatsoever things are lovely; whatsoever things are of good report; are they not all included in that grand and noble aggregate, *A sincere Christian*?

The first lines, considered in such a connection, are wonderfully plaintive and pathetic:

“How lov’d, how *valu’d* once, avails thee not,
“To whom related, or by whom begot.”

They sound, at least in *my ears*, like the voice of sorrow, mingled with admiration. The speaker seems to have been lost, for a while, in melancholy contemplation; suddenly breaks out into this abrupt encomium; then melts into tears, and can proceed no farther. Yet, in this case, how eloquent is silence! while it hints the universal esteem which attended the superiority of birth, which distinguished the deceased wife, it expresses, beyond all the pomp of words, the yearning affection, and heart-felt distress, of the surviving *husband*. Amidst a group of monumental marbles, which are lavish of their panegyric, *this*, I think, resembles that incomparable address of the painter; who having placed round a beautiful expiring virgin, her friends in all the agonies of grief, represented the *unequalled* anguish of the *father*, with far greater liveliness and strength, or rather with an inexpressible emphasis, by drawing a veil over *his* face.

If the last lines are a wide departure from the beaten track of our modern epitaphs, and the very reverse of their high flown compliments;

“A heap of dust alone remains of thee!
“’Tis all **THOU** art!—and all the **PROUD** shall be!”

They are not without a precedent, and one of the most consummate kind. Since they breathe the very spirit of that sacred elegy, in which all the heart of the hero, and the friend, seems to be dissolved; “How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!” 2 Sam. i. 27.—They remind the reader of that awful lesson, which was originally dictated by the Supreme Wisdom: “Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return,” Gen. iii. 19.—They inculcate, with all the force of the most convincing evidence, that solemn admonition delivered by the prophet, “Cease ye from *man*, whose breath is in his nostrils! for wherein is **HE** to be accounted of?” Isaiah ii. 22.

That

Is not this the silent language of those *lamps*, which burn; and of that *heart*, which flames; of those *palms* which flourish; and of that *crown*, which glitters, in the well-imitated and gilded marble? Do they not, to the discerning eye, describe the vigilance of her faith; the fervency of her devotion; her victory over the world; and the celestial diadem, which the LORD, the glorious Judge, shall give her at that day? *

How happy the husband, in such a sharer of his bed, and partner of his fortunes! their inclinations were nicely tuned *unisons*, and all their conversation was *harmony*. How silken the yoke to such a pair, and what blessings were twisted with such bands? Every joy was heightened, and every care alleviated. Nothing seemed wanting to consummate their bliss, but a hopeful progeny, rising around them,—That they might see *themselves* multiplied in their little ones; see their mingled graces, transfused into their offspring; and feel the glow of their affection *augmented*, by being *reflected* from their children. “Grant us this gift, said their u-
“ nited

That no reader, however inattentive, might mistake the sense and design of *this* part of the *fourth* line,

“ ’Tis ALL thou art!”

it is guarded above and beneath.—*Above*, is an expanded book, that seems to be waved, with an air of triumph, over the emblem of death; which we cannot but suppose to be the volume of inspiration, as it exhibits a kind of *abridgment* of its whole contents, in those animated words, BE YE NOT SLOTHFUL, BUT FOLLOWERS OF THEM, WHO, THROUGH FAITH AND PATIENCE, INHERIT THE PROMISES, Heb. vi. 12.—*Beneath*, that every part might be pregnant with instruction, are those striking reflections; worthy the deep consideration of the *biggest* proficient in knowledge and piety, yet obvious to the understanding of the most *untaught* reader; LIFE, HOW SHORT! ETERNITY, HOW LONG!—May my soul learn the *forcible* purport of this *short* lesson, in her contracted span of *time*! and all *eternity* will not be too *long*, to rejoice in having learned it.

* 2 Tim. iv. 8.

“nited prayers, and our satisfactions are crowned; we request no more.”

Alas! how *blind* are mortals to *future* events? How unable to discern, what is really good! * “Give me children, *said* Rachel, or else I die.” † An ardour of impatience, altogether unbecoming: and as mistaken, as unbecoming. She dies not by the *disappointment*, but by the *accomplishment*, of her desire. If children are to parents, like a flowery chaplet, whose beauties blossom with ornament, and whose odours breathe delight; death, or some fell misfortune may find means to entwine themselves with the lovely wreath. Whenever our souls are poured out, with passionate importunity, after any inferior acquisition: It may be truly said, in the words of our divine Master “Ye know not what ye ask.”—Does Providence withhold the thing that we long for? It denies in mercy; and only withholds the occasion of our misery; perhaps the instrument of our ruin. With a sickly appetite, we often loathe what is wholesome, and linger after our bane. Where, *imagination* dreams of unmingled *sweets*; there, *experience* frequently finds the *bitterness* of woe.

Therefore, may we covet immoderately, neither *this*, nor *that* form of earthly felicity; but refer the whole of our condition, to the choice of unerring wisdom. May we learn to renounce our own will; and be ready to make a sacrifice of our warmest

* *Nescia mens hominum fati, fortisque futurae!
Turno tempus erit, magno cum optaverit emptum,
Intactum pallanta; et cum spolia ista diemque
Oderit.*—

Virg.

O mortals! blind in fate, who never know
To bear high fortune, or endure the low!
The time shall come when Turnus, but in vain,
Shall with untouch'd the trophies of the slain,
Shall with the fatal belt were far away,
And curse the dire remembrance of the day.

† Gen. xxx. 1.

warmest wishes, whenever they run counter to the good pleasure of GOD. For, indeed, as to obey his laws, is to be perfectly free; so, to *resign ourselves* to his disposal, is to *establish* our own *happiness*, and be secure from fear of evil.

Here, a small and plain stone is placed upon the ground. Purchased, one would imagine, from the little fund, and formed by the hand of frugality itself. Nothing costly: Not one decoration added: Only a very short inscription: and that so effaced, as to be scarcely intelligible.—Was the depository unfaithful to its trust? Or were the letters worn, by the frequent resort of the surviving family; to mourn over the grave, and revive the remembrance of a most valuable and beloved relative?—For I perceive, upon a closer inspection, that it covers the remains of a father. A *religious father*; snatched from his growing offspring, before they were settled in the world, or so much as their principles fixed by a thorough education.

This, sure, is the most complicated distress, that has hitherto come under our consideration. The *solemnities* of such a *dying chamber*, are some of the most melting and melancholy scenes imaginable.—There lies the affectionate husband; the indulgent parent; the faithful friend; and the generous master. He lies in the last extremities, and on the very point of dissolution. Art has done its all. The raging disease mocks the power of medicine. It hastens, with resistless impetuosity, to execute its dreadful errand; to rend asunder the silver cord of life, and the more delicate tie of mutual love.

A *servant* or two, from a revering distance, cast many a wishful look, and condole their honoured master in the language of sighs. The condescending mildness, with which *he* was wont to *give*, and the dutiful alacrity, with which *they* always received, his easy commands; now imbitter their grief,

and make it trickle plentifully down their honest cheeks.—His *friends*, who have so often gladdened his mind with their enlivening converse, are miserable comforters. A sympathising and mourning pity, is all the relief they are able to contribute: Unless it be augmented by their silent prayers for the divine succour, and a word of consolation suggested from the scripture. *—Those poor innocents, the *children*, crowd around the bed; drowned in tears, and almost frantic with grief, they sob out their little souls, and passionately cry; “Will he leave us? Leave us in a helpless condition! Leave us, to an injurious world!”—These separate streams are all united in the distressed *spouse*, and overwhelm her breast with a tide of sorrows. In her, the *lover* weeps; the *wife* mourns; and all the *mother* yearns. To her, the loss is beyond measure aggravated, by months and years of delightful society, and exalted friendship. Where, alas! can she find such *cordial* affection, or repose such *unreserved* confidence? Where find so *discreet* a counsellor; so *improving* an example; and a guardian, so sedulously attentive to the interests of herself, and her children? See! how she hangs over the languishing bed; most tenderly solicitous to sooth the bitter agonies of her *dearer self*; and, if it were possible, lengthen out a life. on which her own comfort, and the support of her little ones principally depend. Behold her hands, trembling under direful apprehensions, yet wiping the cold dews from the lived cheeks; sometimes, staying the sinking head on her gentle arms, or resting it on her compassionate bosom, See! how she

* Texts of scripture, proper for such an occasion; containing promises—of support under affliction, Lam. iii. 32. Heb. xii. 6. 2 Cor. iv. 17. —of pardon, Isa. liii. 5. Isa. i. 18. 1 John ii. 1, 2. Acts x. 43. —of justification, Rom. v. 9. Rom. viii. 33, 34. 2 Cor. v. 21. —of victory over death, Psal. xxiii. 4. Psal. lxxiii. 26. Hof. xiii. 14. 1 Cor. xv. 56, 57. —of a happy resurrection, John vi. 40. 2 Cor. v. 1. Rev. vii. 16, 17.

the gazes, with a speechless ardour, on the pale countenance, and meagre features. While all her soft passions beat unutterable fondness, and her whole soul is wounded with exquisite anguish.

The *sufferer*, all patient and adoring, yields to the divine will; and, by submission, becomes superior to his affliction. He is sensibly touched with the disconsolate state of his attendants; and pierced with an anxious concern, for the wife, who will soon be a *deserted widow*; for the children, who will soon be *fatherless orphans*. Yet, “though cast down, not in despair.” He is greatly refreshed, by his trust in the everlasting covenant, and his hope of approaching glory. Religion gives a dignity even to distress. At each interval of ease, he comforts his very comforters; and suffers with all the majesty of woe.

The *soul*, just going to abandon the tottering clay, collects all her force, and exerts her *last* efforts. The good man raises himself on his pillow; extends a kind hand to his servants, which is bathed in tears: takes an affecting farewell of his friend; clasps his wife in a feeble embrace; kisses the dear pledges of their mutual love; and then pours all that remains of life and of strength into the following words,—“I die, my dear children: But God, the everlasting God, will be with you.—“Though you lose an earthly parent; you have a Father in heaven, who lives for evermore.—“Nothing, nothing but an unbelieving heart, and an irreligious life, can ever separate you from the regards of his providence—from the endearments of his love.”

He could go no farther. His heart was full; but utterance failed.—After a short pause, prompted by affectionate zeal, with difficulty, great difficulty, he added;—“You, the dear *partner* of my soul, you are now the only protector of our orphans.—I leave you under a weight of cares.—

“ But God, who defendeth the cause of the widow—God, whose promise is faithfulness and truth—God hath said, *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.* *—This revives my drooping spirits—Let this support the wife of my bosom—And now, O Father of compassions, into thy hands, I commend my spirit—and encouraged by thy *promised* goodness, *I leave my fatherless.*”——

Here, he fainted; fell back upon the bed; and lay, for some minutes, bereft of his senses. As a taper, upon the very point of extinction, is sometimes suddenly rekindled, and leaps into a quivering flame: So *life*, before it totally expired, gave a parting struggle, and once more looked abroad from the opening eye-lids.—He would fain have spoke; fain have uttered the sentence, he began. More than once he essayed: but the *organs* of *speech*, were become like a broken vessel; and nothing but the *obstrucling phlegm* rattled in his throat. His *aspect*, however, *spoke* affection inexpressible. With all the father, all the husband, still living in his looks; he takes one more view of the *dear creatures*, whom he had often beheld with a paternal triumph. He turns his dying eyes on that *beloved woman*, whom he never beheld but with a glow of delight. Fixed in this posture, amidst smiles of love, and under a gleam of heaven, they shine out their last.

Upon this, the silent sorrow bursts into loud laments. They weep, and refuse to be comforted. Till some length of time, had given vent to the excess of passion; and the consolations of religion, had stanch'd their bleeding woes. Then, the afflicted family search for the sentence, which fell unfinished from those loved, those venerable, and pious lips. They find it recorded by the prophet *Jeremiah*, containing the direction of infinite wisdom,

* Heb. xiii. 5.

dom, and the promise of almighty goodness ;
 “ Leave thy fatherless children : I will preserve
 “ them alive, and let thy widows trust in me.” *—
 This, now, is the *comfort* of their life, and the *joy*
 of their heart. They treasure it up, in their me-
 mories, as a most valuable *legacy*. They rely up-
 on it as an inexhaustible fund, to supply all their
 necessities ; and to ensure the blessing of success,
 on all their honest labours. They are rich ; they
 are happy ; in this sacred pledge of the divine fa-
 vour. They fear no evil ; they want no good ; be-
 cause GOD is their guide, and their guardian GOD.

No sooner turned from one *memento* of my own,
 and memorial of another’s *decease*, but a second, a
 third, a long succession of these melancholy mo-
 nitors, crowd upon my sight. †— That which has
 fixed my observation, is one of a more *grave* and
sable aspect than the former. I suppose it preserves
 the relics of a more aged person. One would con-
 jecture, that he made somewhat of a figure in his
 station among the living, as his monument does
 among the funeral marbles. Let me draw near ;
 and enquire of the stone, “ *Who, or what* is be-
 “ neath its surface ? ” ——— I am informed he was
 once the owner of a considerable estate ; which was
 much improved, by his own application and ma-
 nagement ; that, he left the world in the *busy* pe-
 ried of life ; advanced a little beyond the *meridian*,
 Probably, replied my musing mind, one of those
indefatigable drudges, who rise early ; late take rest ;
 and eat the bread of carefulness ; not to secure the
 loving kindness of the LORD ; not to make provi-
 sion for any reasonable necessity : but only to *amass*
 together ten thousand times more than they can
 possibly

* Jer. xlix. 11.

† ——— *Plurima mortis imago.*

And grisly death in thousand shapes appears.

Virg.

possibly *use*. Did he not lay schemes for enlarging his fortune, and aggrandizing his family? Did he not propose to join field to field, and add house to house; till his *possessions* were almost as vast as his *desires*? That then, he would sit down and enjoy what he had acquired; * breathe a while from his toilsome pursuit of things temporal, and, perhaps, think a little of things eternal.

But see the *folly of worldly wisdom*! How silly, how childish is the sagacity of (what is called) manly and masterly prudence: when it contrives more solicitously for TIME than it provides for ETERNITY! How strangely infatuated are those subtle heads; which weary themselves in concerting measures for *shadows of a day*: And scarce bestow a thought, on *everlasting realities*!—When every wheel moves on smoothly; when all the well disposed designs are ripening apace for execution; and the long expected crisis of enjoyment seems to approach; behold! GOD from on high laughs at the *Babel builder*; death touches the laboured bubble, and it breaks. The cobweb, most *finely spun* indeed, but more *easily dislodged*, is swept away in an instant; and all the abortive projects are buried in the same grave with their projector. So true is that verdict, which the wisdom from above passes on these *successful unfortunates*: “They walk in a vain shadow, and disquiet themselves in vain.” †

Speak ye, that attended such a one in his last minutes; ye, that heard his expiring sentiments; did he not cry out in the language of disappointed sensuality,

* ——— *Hac mente laborem*
Sese ferre, senes ut in otia tuta recedant,
Atunt, cum sibi sint coniecta cibaria.

Hor.

Profess the various labours they sustain
A decent competence for age to gain,
And then return to indolence and ease.

† Psal. xxxix. 6.

sensuality, "O death! how terrible is thy approach
 " to a man immersed in secular cares, and void of
 " all concern for the never-ending *hereafter*!
 " Where, alas! is the profit, where the comfort,
 " of entering deep into the knowledge, and of be-
 " ing dexterous in the dispatch of earthly affairs;
 " since I have, all the while, neglected the *one thing*
 " *needful*? O destructive mistake! I have been
 " attentive to every *inferior interest*; I have laid
 " myself out on the *trifles* of a *moment*: But have
 " disregarded *heaven*; have forgot *eternal ages*!
 " O! that my days"—Here, he was going on
 to breathe some fruitless wishes; or to form, I
 know not what, ineffectual resolutions. But a
 sudden convulsion shook his nerves; disabled his
 tongue; and, in less than an hour, dissolved his
 frame.

May the children of this world be warned, by the
 dying words of an unhappy brother; and gather
 advantage from his misfortune. Why should they
 pant with impatient ardour, after *white* and *yellow*
earth as if the universe did not afford sufficient for
 every one to take a little? Why should they lade
 themselves with *thick clay*, when they are to "run
 " for an incorruptible crown, and press towards
 " the prize of their high calling?" Why should
 they overload the vessel, in which their everlasting
 ALL is embarked; or fill their arms with *super-*
fluities, when they are to swim for their *lives*? Yet
 so preposterous is the conduct of those persons,
 who are *all industry*, to heap up an abundance of
 the wealth which perisheth: but are scarce so much
 as *faintly desirous* of being rich towards GOD.

O! that we may walk from henceforth through
 all these glittering toys, at least with a wise *indif-*
ference, if not with a superior *disdain*! Having
 enough for the conveniences of life, let us only *ac-*
commodate ourselves with things below, and *lay up*
 our treasures in the regions above.——Whereas,

if we indulge an anxious concern, or lavish an inordinate care, on any transitory possessions; we shall rivet them to our affections with so firm an union, that the utmost severity of pain must attend the separating stroke. By such an eager attachment, to what will certainly be ravished from us, we shall only ensure to ourselves accumulated anguish, against the agonizing hour: We shall plant aforehand our dying pillow with thorns.*

Some, I perceive, arrived at threescore years and ten, before they made their exit; Nay, some few resigned not their breath, till they had numbered fourscore revolving harvests.——These, I would hope, “remembered their creator in the days of “their youth;” before their *strength* became *labour* and *sorrow*;—before that low ebb of languishing nature, when “the keepers of the house tremble, and those that look out of the windows are “darkened:”† When, even the lighting down of the *grasshopper* is a *burden* on the bending shoulders; and *desire* itself *fails* in the listless, inactive, lethargic soul: Before those heavy hours come and those tiresome moments draw nigh; in which there is too much reason to say, “We have no pleasure in “them;” no improvement from them.

If their lamps were unfurnished with oil, how unfit must they be, in such decrepit circumstances,
to

* Lean not on earth; 'twill pierce thee to the heart;

A broken reed at best, but oft a spear:

On its sharp point peace bleeds, and hope expires.

Night Thoughts, N. III.

† Eccl. xii. 3, 5. I need not remind my reader, that by the *former* of these *figurative* expressions is signified, the *enervated* state of the *hands* and *arms*; by the *latter*, the *dimness* of the *eyes*, or the *total loss* of *sight*: That, taken in connection with other parts of the chapter, they exhibit, in a series of *elegant similitudes*, a description of the *various infirmities*, which accompany *old age*.

to go to the market and buy ! * For, besides a variety of disorders, arising from the enfeebled constitution ; their corruptions must be surprisngly strengthened, by such a long course of irreligion. *Evil habits* must have *struck* the deepest *root* : must have *twisted* themselves with every fibre of the heart ; and be as throughly ingrained in the disposition, as the foot in the Ethiopian's complexion, or the spots in the leopard's skin. If such a one, under such disadvantages, surmounts all the difficulties, that lie in his way to glory ; it must be a great and mighty salvation indeed. If such a one escapes destruction, and is saved at the last, it must, without all peradventure, be " so as by fire." †

This is the season that stands in need of comfort, and is very improper to enter upon the conflict. The husbandman should now be putting in his sickle, or eating the fruit of his labours ; not beginning to break up the ground, or scatter the seed. Nothing it is true, is impossible with GOD : He said, " Let there be light, and there was light ;" instantaneous light, diffused as quick as thought, through all the dismal dominion of primeval darkness. At his command, a leprosy of the longest continuance, and utmost inveteracy, departs in a moment. He can, in the greatness of his strength, quicken the wretch, that has lain dead in trespasses and sins, not *four days* only, but *four score years*.— Yet trust not, O trust not, a point of such inexpressible importance, to so dreadful an uncertainty, God may suspend his power ; may withdraw his help ; may swear in his wrath, that such abusers of his long suffering, shall " never enter into his rest."

Ye therefore, that are *vigorous in health*, and *blooming in years*, improve the precious opportunity, Improve your golden hours, to the noblest of all purposes : Such as may render you meet for the inheritance

* Matth. xxv. 9.

† 1 Cor. iii. 15.

inheritance of saints in light ; and ascertain your title to a state of *immortal youth*, to a crown of *eternal glory*. * Stand not all the prime of your day, idle : trifle no longer with the offers of this immense felicity : But make haste, and delay not the time, to keep GOD's commandments. While you are loitering in a gay insensibility, death may be bending his bow, and marking you out for speedy victims.——Not long ago, I happened to espy a thoughtless *jay*. The poor bird was idly busied in dressing his pretty plumes, or hopping carelessly from spray to spray. A sportsman coming by, observes the feathered rover, immediately he lifts the tube, and levels his blow, swifter than whirlwind flies the leaden death ; and in a moment, lays the silly creature breathless on the ground. Such, *such* may be the fate of the man, who has a fair occasion of *obtaining* grace to day, and wantonly *postpones* the improvement of it, till to-morrow. He may be cut off, in the midst of his folly, and ruined *for ever*, while he is dreaming of being *wise hereafter*.

Some, no doubt, came to this their last retreat, “ full of piety and full of days ; ” “ as a flock of “ corn ripe with age and laden with plenty, cometh in his season.” †—These were children of light, and *wise* in their generations ; wise with that exalted wisdom which cometh from above ; with that

* May I be permitted to recommend, as a treasure of inestimable value, and a treatise particularly apposite to my subject, Dr. Lucas's *Inquiry after Happiness* ? That part especially, which displays the method, and enumerates the advantage of *improving life, or living much in a little time* ; chap. iii. p. 158. of the sixth edition. An *author*, in whom the gentleman, the scholar, and the Christian, are most happily united.——A *performance* which, in point of solid argument, unaffected piety, and a vein of thought amazingly fertile, has, perhaps, no superior.——Nor can I wish my reader a more refined pleasure, or a more substantial happiness, than of having the sentiments of this entertaining and pathetic writer wove into the very texture of his heart.

† Job. v. 26.

that enduring wisdom which lasts to eternity.—
Rich also they were, more honourably and permanently rich, than all the votaries of Mammon. The wealth of the *one* has made itself wings, and is irrecoverably gone; while the wretched acquirers are transmitted, to that place of penury and pain; where, not so much as one drop of water is allowed, to cool their scorched tongues. Whereas the stores of the *other* still abide with them; will never depart from them; but make them glad, for ever and ever, in the city of their God. Their treasures were such, as no created power could *take away*; such as none but infinite beneficence can *bestow*; and (oh! comfortable to consider!) such as I, and every indigent longing sinner, may *obtain*; treasures of heavenly knowledge, and saving faith; treasures of atoning blood, and imputed righteousness.

Here lie their *bodies*,* in “ peaceable habita-
 “ tions,

* Some, I know are offended at our burying corpses within the church, and exclaim against it as a very great *impropriety* and *indecency*: But this I imagine, proceeds from an excessive and *mistaken*, *delicacy*. Let proper care be taken to secure from injury the *foundations* of the *building*, and to prevent the exhalation of any *noxious effluvia*, from the putrifying flesh; and I cannot discover any inconveniences attending this practice.

The notion, that noisome carcases (as they are called) are very unbecoming a place consecrated to religious purposes, seems to be founded on an *antiquated Jewish* canon; whereby it was declared, that a dead body imparted defilement to the person who touched it, and polluted the spot where it was lodged, on which account the Jews were scrupulously careful to have their sepulchres built at a distance from their houses; and make it a point of conscience, not to suffer any burying places to subsist in the city. But as this was a rite purely *ceremonial*, it seems to be entirely superseded by the *gospel* dispensation.

I cannot forbear thinking, that under the Christian economy, there is a propriety and usefulness in the custom. — *Usefulness*, because it must render our solemn assemblies more venerable and awful. For when we walk over the dust of our friends, or kneel upon the ashes of our relations; this awakening circumstance must strike a lively impression of our mortality. And what consideration can be more effectual, to make us serious and attentive in hearing,

"tions and quiet resting places." Here, they have thrown off every *burden*, and are escaped from every *snare*. The head aches no more; the eye forgets to weep; the flesh is no longer *racked* with *acute*, nor *pines* away under *lingering* distempers. Here they receive a final release from pain, and an everlasting discharge from sorrow. Here, *danger* never threatens them, with her terrifying alarms; but *tranquility* softens their couch, and *safety*

ing, earnest and importunate in praying?—As for the *fitness* of the usage it seems perfectly suitable to the design of those sacred edifices. They are set apart for God; not only to receive his worshippers, but to preserve the furniture for holy ministrations, and what is, in a peculiar manner, appropriated to the Divine Majesty. And are not the bodies of the saints the Almighty's property? Were they not *once* the objects of his *tender love*? are they not *still* the subjects of his *special care*? Has he not given commandment concerning the bones of his elect; and charged the ocean, and enjoined the grave, to keep them till *that day*? Are they not precious in his esteem? So precious, that when mountains, bright with *gems*, or rich with *mines*, are abandoned to the devouring flames, *these* shall be rescued from the fiery ruin! *these* shall be translated into JEHOVAH's kingdom; and, conjointly with the soul, made "his *jewels*," made his, "his peculiar treasure;" made to shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever.

Is not CHRIST "the LORD of our bodies?" Are they not bought with a price? Bought, not with corruptible things, silver and gold; but with his divinely precious blood. And if the blessed *Jesus* obtained the redemption of our bodies, at so infinitely dear a rate! can it enter into our hearts to conceive, that he should dislike to have them reposed under his own habitation?—Once more, Are not the bodies of the faithful, "temples of the Holy Ghost?" and is there not, upon this supposition, an apparent *propriety*, rather than the least *indecorum*, in remitting these temples of flesh to the temples made with hands? They are vessels of honour, instruments of righteousness, and, even when broken by death, like the fragments of a golden bowl, are valuable, are worthy to be laid up in the safest, most honourable repositories.

Upon the whole, since the Lord Jesus has purchased them at the expence of his blood; and the blessed Spirit has honoured them with his indwelling presence; since they are right dear in the sight of the adorable Trinity, and undoubted heirs of a glorious immortality; why should it be thought a thing improper, to admit them to a transient rest in their heavenly Father's house? Why may they not lie down and sleep in the *outer courts*, since they are soon to be introduced into the *inmost mansions* of everlasting honour and joy?

safety guards their repose.—Rest then, ye precious relics, within this hospitable gloom; rest in gentle slumbers, till the last trumpet shall give the welcome signal, and sound aloud, through all your silent mansions. “Arise; shine; for your light is “come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon “you.” *

To these, how *calm* was the *evening of life*! In what a smiling serenity, did their sun go down! When their flesh and their heart failed, how reviving was the remembrance of an all-sufficient Redeemer; once dying for *their* sins, now risen again for *their* justification! How cheering the well-grounded hope of pardon for their transgressions, and peace with God, through *Jesus Christ* our Lord! How did this *assuage* the agonies, and *sweeten* the *bitterness* of death?—Where now is *wealth*, with all her golden mountains? Where is *honour*, with her proud trophies of renown? Where are all the *vain pomps* of a deluded world? Can *they* administer any support in this last extremity? Can *they* compose the affrighted thoughts, or buoy up the departing soul amidst all the pangs of dissolution?—The followers of the Lamb seem pleased and triumphant, even at their last gasp. “God’s everlasting arms are underneath” † their fainting heads. His Spirit whispers peace and consolation to their consciences. In the strength of these heavenly succours, they quit the field *not captives* but *conquerors*; with “*hopes full of immortality.*”

And now they are gone.—The struggles of reluctant nature are over. The body sleeps in death; the soul launches into the *invisible state*.—But, who can imagine the delighted surprise, when they find themselves surrounded by *guardian angels*, instead of *sweeping friends*.—How securely do they wing their way, and pass through unknown worlds, under

* Isaiah lx. 1.

† Deut. xxxiii. 27.

der the conduct of those celestial guides!—The *vale of tears* is quite lost. Farewel, for ever, the realms of woe, and rage of malignant beings. They arrive on the *frontiers* of inexpressible *felicity*. They “are come to the city of the living GOD:” while a voice, sweeter than music in her softest strains; sweet as the harmony of hymning seraphim; congratulates their arrival, and bespeaks their admission: “Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye “lift up, ye everlasting doors:” that the heirs of glory may enter in.

Here, then, let us leave the spirits and souls of the righteous; escaped from an entangling *wilderness*, and received into a *paradise* of delights! escaped from the territories of disquietude, and settled in regions of unmolested security! Here they sit down with *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, in the kingdom of their father. Here they mingle with an innumerable company of angels, and rejoice around the throne of the Lamb: rejoice in the *fruition* of *present* felicity, and in the *assured expectation* of an inconceivable addition to their bliss; “when GOD “shall call the heavens from above, and the earth, “that he may judge his people.”*

“Fools

* Seneca’s reflections upon the state of holy souls, delivered from the burden of the flesh, are sparkling and fine; yet very *indistinct* and *empty*, compared with the particulars mentioned above, and with many others that might be collected from scripture.—
In hoc tam presselloso, et in omnes temp. states exposito navigantibus mari, nullus portus, nisi mortis est. Ne itaque invideris fratri tuo; quiescit. Tandem liber, tandem tutus, tandem æternus est. Fruitor nunc aperto et libero cælo; ex humili et depresso, in eum emicuit locum, qui solutus vinculis animas beato recipit sinu; et nunc omnia rerum natura bona cum summa voluptate precipit. Sen. ad Polyb.

“In this boisterous ocean, exposed to every tempest, there is no haven for passengers, but death. Do not therefore lament thy brother; he is at rest. Now he is free, now he is safe, now he is immortal. Now he possesses the free and extensive regions of felicity; from a mean and depressed condition he shines forth in that place, which receives souls, freed from fetters, into its blessed asylum; and now, with perfect pleasure, he anticipates the highest possible happiness.”

“ Fools accounted their life madness, and their
 “ end to be without honour: but they are num-
 “ bered among the children of GOD; and their
 “ lot, *their distinguished and eternal lot*, is among
 “ the saints.”* However, therefore, an undiscerning world may *despise*, and a profane world *villify*, the truly religious; be this the supreme, the invariable desire of my heart! “ Let me live the
 “ life, and die the death, of the righteous. Oh!
 “ let my latter end, and future state, be like
 “ theirs!”

What figure is that, which strikes my eye, from an eminent part of the wall? It is not only placed in a more *elevated situation*, than the rest; but carries a more splendid and *sumptuous air*, than ordinary. Swords and spears! murdering engines, and instruments of slaughter; adorn the stone with a formidable magnificence.—It proves to be the monument of a noble warrior.

Is such respect, thought I, paid to the memory of this brave soldier, for sacrificing his life to the *public good*?—Then, what honours, what immortal honours, are due to the great Captain of our salvation? who, though Lord of the angelic legions; and supreme commander of all the heavenly hosts; willingly offered himself a *bleeding propitiation* for *sinners*!

The *one* died, being a *mortal*; and only yielded up a life, that was long before forfeited to divine justice; which must soon have been surrendered as a *debt to nature*, if it had not fallen as a *prey to war*.—But CHRIST took flesh, and gave up the ghost, though he was the great I AM; the fountain of existence, who calls happiness and immortality all his own. He, who thought it no robbery to be *equal with God*; he, whose outgoings were *from everlasting*;

* Wisdom v. 4, 5.

lasting; even he, was made in the *likeness of man*, and *cut off* out of the land of the living. Wonder, O heavens! be astonished, O earth! *He* died the death, of whom it is witnessed, that “he is the “true GOD, and eternal life.”*

The *one* exposed himself to *peril* in the *service* of his *sovereign*, and his *country*; which, though it was glorious to do, yet would have been ignominious, in such circumstances, to have declined.—But CHRIST took the field, though he was the *blessed* and *only Potentate*, the KING of kings, and LORD of lords. CHRIST took the field, though he was *sure* to *drop* in the engagement; and put on the harness, though he *knew* before hand, it must *reek* with his *blood*. That Prince of Heaven resigned his royal person, not barely to the *hazard*, but to the *inevitable stroke*; to death, certain in its approach, and armed with all its horrors.—And for *whom*? Not for those who were in any degree deserving; but for his own *disobedient creatures*; for the pardon of condemned malefactors; for a band of rebels, a race of traitors, the most obnoxious and inexcusable of all criminals, whom he might have left to perish in their iniquities, without the least *impeachment* of his *goodness*; nay, to the advantageous *display* of his avenging *justice*.

The *one*, it is probable, died *expeditiously*; was soon wounded, and soon slain; a bullet lodged in his heart, a sword sheathed in his breast, or a battle axe, cleaving the brain, might put a *speedy end* to his misery; dispatch him “as in a moment.”—Whereas, the divine Redeemer expired in *tedious* and protracted *torments*. His pangs were as *lingering*, as they were *exquisite*. Even in the *prelude* to his last sufferings, what a load of sorrows overwhelmed his sacred humanity! till the intolerable pressure wrung blood, instead of sweat, from every pore;

* 1 John v. 20.

pore; till the crimson flood bathed his body, stained all his raiment, and tinged the very stone.—But, when the last *scene* of the tragedy commenced, when the executioner's hammer had nailed him to the cross; Oh! how many *dismal hours*, did that amiable and illustrious sufferer hang a spectacle of woe, to GOD, to angels, and to men! His temples mangled with the thorny crown! his hands and feet cleft with rugged irons! his flesh covered with wounds, smarting and agonizing in every vein! and his soul, his very soul, pierced with pangs of unutterable distress! So *long* he hung, that nature, through all her dominions, was thrown into sympathizing commotions. The *earth* could no longer sustain such barbarous indignities, without trembling! nor the *sun* behold them, without horror. Nay, so long did he hang in this extremity of agony and torture, that the alarm reached even the remote *regions* of the *dead*.—Never, O my soul, never forget the amazing truth! The Lamb of God was seized; was bound; was slaughtered with the utmost inhumanity, and endured *death*, in all its *bitterness*, for thee! His murderers, studiously cruel, so guided the fatal cup, that he tasted *every drop* of its gall, before he drank it off to the *very dregs*.

Once again; the warrior died like a *hero*, and fell gallantly in the field of battle.—But died not **CHRIST** “as a fool dieth?”* Not on the *bed of honour*, with scars of glory in his breast; but like some execrable miscreant, *on a gibbet*; with lashes of the vile scourge on his back. Yes, the blessed **JESUS** bowed his expiring head on the *accursed tree*, and poured out his soul betwixt two *infamous fellows*; suspended between heaven and earth, as an *outcast* from both, and *unworthy* of either.

Oh, what suitable returns, of inflamed and adoring devotion, can we make to the *Holy One* of
GOD;

* 2 Sam. iii. 33. Of this indignity our Lord complains; “Are ye come out as against a thief?” Matth. xxvi. 55.

GOD ; thus dying, that we might live ? Dying in *ignominy* and *anguish*, that *we* might live for ever in the *heights* of *joy*, and sit for ever on *thrones* of *glory*.—Alas ! it is not in us, impotent, insensible mortals, to be duly thankful. He only, who confers such inconceivably rich favours can enkindle a proper warmth of grateful affection. Then build thyself a *monument*, most gracious *Immanuel*, build thyself an everlasting monument of *gratitude* in our *souls*. Inscribe the memory of thy matchless beneficence, not with *ink* and *pen*, but with that precious *blood*, which gushed from thy wounded *veins*. Engrave it, not with the *hammer* and *chisel*, but with that sharpened *spear*, which pierced thy blessed *side*. Let it stand conspicuous and indelible, not on outward *tables of stone*, but on the very inmost *tables of our hearts*.

One thing more let me observe, before I bid adieu to this entombed warrior, and his garnished sepulchre. How mean are these ostentatious methods, of *bribing the vote of fame*, and purchasing a little posthumous renown ! What a poor substitute for a set of *memorable actions*, is *polished alabaster*, or the mimicry of sculptured marble ! The real excellency of this bleeding patriot * is written
on

* Sir Bevil Granville, slain in the civil wars, at an engagement with the rebels. — It may possibly be some entertainment to the reader, if I subjoin Sir Bevil's character ; as it is drawn by that celebrated pen, which wrote the history of those calamitous times. — " That which would have clouded any victory," says the noble historian, " and made the loss of others less spoken of, was the death of Sir Bevil Granville. He was indeed an excellent person, whose activity, interest, and reputation, were the foundation of what had been done in Cornwall : His temper and affections so public, that no accident which happened could make any impression upon him ; and his example kept others from taking any thing ill, or at least seeming to do so. In a word, a brighter courage, and a gentler disposition, were never married together, to make the most chearful and innocent conversation."

on the minds of his countymen; it would be remembered with applause, so long as the nation subsists, without this *artificial expedient* to perpetuate it.—And such, *such is* the monument I would wish for *myself*. Let me leave a *memorial* in the *breasts* of my fellow creatures. Let surviving friends bear witness, that I have not lived to myself alone, nor been altogether unserviceable in my generation. O! let an uninterrupted series of *beneficent offices* be the *inscription*, and the *best interests* of my acquaintance the *plate* that exhibits it.

Let the *poor*, as they pass by my grave, point at the little spot, and thankfully acknowledge, “There
 “ lies the man, whose unwearied kindness was the
 “ constant relief of my various distresses; who
 “ tenderly visited my languishing bed, and readily
 “ supplied my indigent circumstances. How often
 “ were his counsels a guide to my perplexed
 “ thoughts, and a cordial to my dejected spirit!
 “ It is owing to GOD’s blessing on his seasonable
 “ charities, and prudent consolations; that I now
 “ live, and live in comfort.”——Let a person,
 once *ignorant and ungodly*, lift up his eyes to heaven,
 and say within himself, as he walks over my bones,
 “ Here are the last remains of that sincere friend,
 “ who *watched for my soul*. I can never forget,
 “ with what a heedless gaiety I was posting on in
 “ the paths of perdition: and I tremble to think,
 “ into what irretrievable ruin I might quickly have
 “ been plunged, had not his faithful admonitions
 “ arrested me in the wild career. I was unacquaint-
 “ ed with the gospel of peace, and had no concern
 “ for its unsearchable treasures: but now enlight-
 “ ened by his *instructive conversation*, I see the all-
 “ sufficiency of my Saviour; and, animated by his
 “ *repeated exhortations*, I account all things but
 “ loss, that I may win CHRIST. Methinks his
 “ discourses, seasoned with religion, and sent home
 “ by the divine Spirit, still tingle in my ears; are
 “ still

“ still warm on my heart ; and, I trust, will be
 “ more and more operative, till we meet each other
 “ in the house not made with hands, eternal in the
 “ heavens.”

The only *infallible* way of immortalizing our characters ; a way equally open to the meanest, and most exalted fortune ; is, “ to make our calling and election sure ;” to gain some sweet evidence, that our *names are written in heaven*. Then, however they may be disregarded or forgotten among men ; they will not fail to be had in everlasting remembrance, before the LORD.—This is, of all distinctions, far the noblest : this will issue in never-dying renown. *Ambition*, be this thy object, and every page of scripture will *sanctify* thy *passion* ; even grace itself will fan thy flame.—As to earthly memorials, yet a little while and they are all obliterated. The tongue of those, whose happiness we have zealously promoted, must soon be silent in the coffin. Characters cut with a pen of iron, and committed to the solid rock, will ere long cease to be legible.* But as many as are enrolled “ in the Lamb’s book of life,” he himself declares, shall never be blotted out from those annals of eternity.† When a flight of years has mouldered the *triumphant column* into dust : when the *brazen statue* perishes, under the corroding hand of time : *those honours* still continue ; still are blooming and incorruptible, in the world of glory.

Make the extended *skies* your tomb ;
 Let *stars* record your worth :
 Yet know, vain mortals, all must die,
 As nature’s *sickliest birth*.

Would

* ——— *Data sunt ipsis quoque fata sepulchris.*

Juv.

For sepulchres themselves must crumbling fall
 In time’s abyss, the common grave of all.

† Rev. iii. 5.

Would bounteous Heav'n indulge my pray'r,
 I frame a nobler choice:
 Nor, living, with the pompous pile:
 Nor, dead, regret the loss.

In thy fair *book of life* divine,
 My GOD, inscribe my name:
 There let it fill some humble place,
 Beneath the slaughter'd Lamb.

Thy saints, while ages roll away,
 In endless fame survive;
 Their *glories*, o'er the *wrongs of time*,
 Greatly triumphant, live.

Yonder entrance leads, I suppose, to the *vault*.
 Let me turn aside, and take one view of the habitation, and its tenants.—The sullen *door* grates upon its hinges: Not used to receive many visitors, it admits me with reluctance and murmurs.—What meaneth this *sudden trepidation*; while I descend the steps, and am visiting the pale nations of the dead?—Be composed, my spirits; there is nothing to fear, in these quiet chambers: “Here, even the wicked cease from troubling.”

Good Heavens! what a solemn scene! how dismal the *gloom*! Here is perpetual darkness, and night even at noon-day.—How doleful the *solitude*! not one trace of cheerful society; but sorrow and terror seem to have made this, their dreaded abode.—Hark! how the hollow dome resounds, at every tread. The *echoes*, that long have slept are awakened, and whisper along the walls.

A beam or two finds its way through the grates, and reflects a feeble glimmer from the nails of the *coffins*. So many of those sad spectacles, half concealed in shades! half seen dimly by the baleful twilight, add a deeper horror to these gloomy man-

sions.—I pore upon the *inscriptions*, and am just able to pick out, that these are the remains of the *rich and renowned*. No vulgar dead are deposited here. The *Most illustrious*, and *Right Honourable*, have claimed this for their last retreat. And, indeed, they retain somewhat of a shadowy pre-eminence. They lie ranged in mournful order, and in a sort of silent pomp, under the arches of an ample sepulchre; while meaner corpses, without much ceremony, “go down to the stones of the “pit.”

My apprehensions recover from their surprise: I find here are no *phantoms*, but such as *fear* raises. —However, it still amazes me, to observe the wonders of this *nether world*. Those, who received *vast revenues*, and called whole lordships their own; are here reduced to half a dozen feet of earth, or confined in a *few sheets of lead*. Rooms of state, and sumptuous furniture, are resigned; for no other ornament than the *shroud*, for no other apartment than the darksome *niche*. Where is the star, that blazed upon the breast; or coronet that glittered round the temples? The only remains of departed dignity are, the weather-beaten hatchment, and the tattered escutcheon. I see no splendid retinue surrounding this solitary dwelling? The lordly equipage hovers no longer about the lifeless master. He has no other attendant than a dusty *statue*, which, while the regardless world is as gay as ever, the sculptor's hand has taught to weep.

Those who gloried in high-born ancestors, and *noble pedigree*; here, drop their lofty pretensions. They acknowledge kindred with creeping things, and *quarter arms* with the meanest reptiles. “They “say to corruption, Thou art my father! and to “the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister.” Or, should they still assume the stile of distinction, alas! how impotent were the claim! how apparent the

the ostentation! Is it said by their monument,
HERE LIES THE GREAT? How easily is it replied
by the spectator,

—————False marble! where?
Nothing but poor and sordid dust lies here.

O mortifying truth! sufficient, one would think,
to wean the most sanguine appetite from this transi-
tory state of things; from its sickly satisfactions,
its fading glories, its vanishing treasures.

For *now*, ye *lying vanities* of life!
Ye ever-tempting, ever cheating train!
Where are ye *now*? and what is your amount?

What is all the world to these poor breathless be-
ings? ———What are their *pleasures*? A bubble
broke,—What their *honours*? A dream that is for-
gotten.—What the *sum total* of their *enjoyments* be-
low? Once, perhaps, it appeared to inexperienced
and fond desire, something considerable: but, now
death has measured it with his line, and weighed it
in his scale, what is the upshot? Alas! it is shorter
than a span; lighter than the dancing spark; and
driven away like the dissolving smoke.

Indulge, my soul, a serious pause. Recollect all
the gay things, that were wont to dazzle thy eyes,
and inveigle thy affections. *Here*, examine those
baits of sense: here form an estimate of their *real*
value. Suppose thyself *first* among the *favourites*
of *fortune*; who revel in the *lap of pleasure*; who
shine in the *robes of honour*: and swim in *tides* of
inexhaustible riches: yet, how soon would the pass-
ing-bell proclaim thy exit! And, when once that
iron call has summoned thee to thy future reckon-
ing; where would all these gratifications be? At
that period, how will all the pageantry of the most
affluent, splendid, or luxurious circumstances, va-

nish into empty air! And is *this* a happiness so passionately to be coveted?

I thank you, ye relicks of sounding titles, and magnificent names; ye have taught me more of the littleness of the world, than all the volumes of my library. Your *nobility*, arrayed in a *winding-sheet*; your *grandeur*, mouldering in an *urn*; are the most indisputable proofs, of the *nothingness* of created things. Never, surely, did Providence write this important point in such legible characters, as in the ashes of *my Lord*, or on the corpse of *his Grace*. *—Let others, if they please, pay their obsequious court to your wealthy sons; and ignobly fawn, or anxiously sue, for preferments: My thoughts shall often resort, in pensive contemplation, to the sepulchres of their fires; and learn, from their sleeping dust,—to moderate my expectations from mortals;—to stand *disengaged* from every *undue attachment* to the little interests of time; to get above the delusive *amusements* of honour, the gaudy *tinsels* of wealth, and all the empty *shadows* of a perishing world.

Hark! what *sound* is that!——In such a situation, every noise alarms.——Solemn and slow, it breaks again upon the silent air.——It is the *striking of the clock*: designed, one would imagine, to ratify all my serious meditations. Methinks it says, *amen*, and sets a seal to every improving hint. It tells me, That another portion of my appointed time is elapsed. One calls it, “the knell of my departed “hours.” It is the watch-word to vigilance and activity. It cries, in the ear of reason, “Redeem “the time. Catch the favourable *gales of opportunity*: O! catch them, while they breathe; before “they

* ----- *Mors sola fatetur
Quantula sint hominum corpuscula.*

Juv.

Death only this mysterious truth unfolds,
The mighty soul how small a body holds.

"they are irrecoverably lost. The span of life shortens continually. Thy minutes are all upon the wing, and hastening to be gone. Thou art a borderer upon eternity; and making incessant advances to the state thou art contemplating."—O! may the admonition sink deep into an attentive and an obedient mind! May it teach me that *heavenly arithmetic*, of "numbering my days, and ap-
plying my heart unto wisdom!"

I have often walked beneath the impending promontory's craggy *cliff*; I have sometimes trode the vast spaces of the lonely *desert*; and penetrated the inmost *recesses* of the dreary *cavern*: but never, never beheld nature labouring with so *tremendous* a form; never felt such *impressions of awe*, striking cold on my heart, as under these black-brow'd arches, amidst these mouldy walls, and surrounded by such rueful objects; where melancholy, deepest melancholy, for ever spreads her raven wings.—Let me now emerge from the damp and dreadful obscurity.—Farewel, ye seats of desolation, and shades of death!—Gladly I revisit the realms of day.

Having cast a *superficial view* upon these receptacles of the dead, curiosity prompts my inquiry to a more *intimate survey*. Could we draw back the covering of the tomb; could we discern what those are now, who once were mortals—Oh! how would it surprise and grieve us! *Surprise* us, to behold the prodigious transformation, which has taken place on every individual; *grieve* us, to observe the dishonour done to our nature in general, within these subterraneous lodgments!

Here, the sweet and winning *aspect*, that wore perpetually an attractive smile; grins horribly, a naked, ghastly skull.—The *eye*, that outshone the diamond's brilliancy, and glanced its lovely lighting into the most guarded heart: alas! where is

it? Where shall we find the rolling sparkler? How are all its sprightly beams eclipsed! totally eclipsed!—The *tongue*, that once commander all the charms of harmony, and all the powers of eloquence, in this strange land has “forgot its cunning.” Where are now those *strains* of *melody*, which ravished our ears? Where is that *flow* of *persuasion*, which carried captive our judgments? The great master of language, and of song, is become silent as the night that surrounds him.—The pampered *flesh*, so lately clothed in purple and fine linen, how is it covered rudely with clods of clay! There was a time, when the *timorously nice* creature would scarce “adventure to set a foot upon the ground, for delicateness and tendernefs;”* but is now enwrapped in clammy earth, and sleeps on no softer a pillow than the *ragged gravel stones*.—Here, “the *strong men* bow themselves.” The *nervous arm* is unstrung, the *brawny sinews* are relaxed; the *limbs*, not long ago the seats of vigour and activity, lie down *motionless*; and the *bones*, which were as bars of *iron*, are crumbled into *dust*.

Here, the *man of business* forgets all his favourite schemes, and discontinues the pursuit of gain.—Here, is a total stand of the circulation of merchandize, and the hurry of trade. In these solitary recesses as in the building of Solomon’s temple, is heard no sound of the hammer and axe. The winding-sheet, and the coffin, are the utmost bound of all earthly devices. “Hitherto may they go, but no farther.”—Here, the *sons of pleasure* take a final farewell of their dear delights. No more is the sensualist anointed with oil, or crowned with rose-buds. He chants no more to the melody of the viol; nor revels any longer at the banquet of wine. Instead of sumptuous tables, and delicious treats, the poor voluptuary is himself a feast for

for fattened insects; the reptile riots in his flesh;
 "the worm feeds sweetly on him."*—Here,
 also, *beauty* fails; bright beauty drops her lustre
 here. Oh! how her roses fade, and her lilies lan-
 guish, in this bleak soil! How does the grand le-
 veller pour contempt upon the charmer of our
 hearts! How turn to deformity what captivated the
 world before!

Could the *lover* have a sight of his once inchant-
 ing *fair one*; what a startling astonishment would
 seize him!—"Is this the object I not long ago
 "so passionately admired! I said, she was *divinely*
 "*fair*; and thought her more than mortal. Her
 "form was *symmetry itself*; every *elegance* breath-
 "ed in her air; and *all the graces* waited on her
 "motions.—It was *music* when she spoke; but,
 "when she spoke encouragement, it was little less
 "than *rapture*. How my heart danced to those
 "charming accents!—And can that, which some
 "weeks ago was to admiration *lovely*, be now so
 "insufferably *loathsome*?—Where are those blush-
 "ing cheeks; where the coral lips; where that
 "ivory neck, on which the curling jet, in such
 "glossy ringlets, flowed; with a thousand other
 "beauties of person, and ten thousand delicacies
 "of action?†—Amazing, distracting alteration!—
 "Fondly I gazed upon the glittering *meteor*; it
 "shone brightly, and I mistook it for a *star*; for

* Job xxiv. 20.

† *Quo fugit Venus? Hui! Quove color? decens*
Quo minus! Quid habet illius, illius,
Quæ spirabat amores,
Quæ me supererat mihi!

Hor.

Ah! whither is thy Venus fled?

That bloom by nature's cunning spread?

That every graceful art?

Of her, of her, what now remains,

Who breath'd the loves, who charm'd the swains,

And snatch'd me from my heart?

“ a permanent and substantial good. But how is
 “ it fallen ! fallen from an orb, not its own ! and
 “ all that I can trace on earth is but a *putrid*
 “ *mass*.”

Lie, poor Florella ! lie deep, as thou dost, in obscure darkness. Let night, with her impenetrable shades, always conceal thee. Thy dwelling agrees with thy condition. May no prying eye be witness to thy disgrace ; but let thy *surviving sisters* think upon thy state, when they contemplate the *idol* in the *glass*. When the pleasing image rises gracefully to view, surrounded with a world of charms ! and flushed with joy at the consciousness of them all ;—then, in those minutes of temptation and danger, when *vanity* uses to steal into the thoughts ;—then let them remember, what a *veil of horror* is drawn over a *face*, that was once beautiful and *brilliant* as theirs. Such a seasonable reflection might regulate the labours of the toilet ; and create a more earnest solicitude to *polish* the *jewel*, than to *varnish* the *casquet*. It might then become their highest ambition, to have the mind decked with divine virtues ; and dressed after the amiable pattern of their Redeemer’s holiness.

And would this prejudice their persons, or depreciate their charms ?—Quite the reverse ; it would spread a sort of *heavenly glory*, over the finest *set of features* ; and heighten the loveliness of every other engaging accomplishment.—And what is yet a more inviting consideration ; these flowers would not *wither* with nature, nor be *tarnished* by time ; but would open continually into richer beauties, and *flourish* even in the *winter of age*.—But, the most incomparable recommendation of these noble qualities, is, that, from their hallowed *relics*, as from the fragrant ashes of the *phoenix*, will ere long arise an *illustrious form*, bright as the wings of angels ; lasting, as the light of the new Jerusalem.

For

For my part, the remembrance of this sad *revolution*, shall make me *ashamed* to pay my devotion to a shrine of perishing flesh; and *afraid* to expect *all* my happiness from so brittle a joy. It shall teach me, not to think too highly of well-proportioned clay; though formed in the most elegant mould, and animated with the sweetest soul. It is Heaven's last, best, and crowning gift; to be received with *gratitude*, and cherished with *love*, as a most valuable *blessing*; nor worshipped with the insense of *flattery*, and strains of fulsome *adoration*, as a *goddess*—It will cure, I trust, the *dotage* of my eyes; and incline me always to prefer the *substantial* “ornaments of a meek and virtuous *spirit*,” before the transient decorations of white and red on the *skin*.

Here, I called in my roving meditations, from their long excursion on this tender subject. *Fancy* listened a while, to the soliloquy of a lover; but now *judgment* resumes the reigns, and guides my thoughts to more near and self-interesting inquiries.——However, upon a review of the whole scene; crowded with spectacles of mortality, and trophies of death; I could not forbear smiting my breast, and fetching a sigh, and lamenting over the noblest of all visible beings, laid prostrate under the feet of “the pale horse and his rider.”*——I could not forbear that pathetic exclamation; “O! thou Adam, what hast thou done!”† What desolation has thy disobedience wrought in the earth!——O! the ruinous, the transcendent *malig-nity* of *sin*! *Sin*, has demolished so many stately structures of flesh: *Sin*, has made such havoc, among the most excellent ranks of God's lower creation; and *sin* (that deadly bane of our nature) would have plunged our *better part*, into the execrable

* Rev. vi. 8.

† 2 Esdr. vii. 41.

crable horrors of the nethermost *hell*; had not our merciful Mediator interposed, and given himself for our ransom.—Therefore, what grateful acknowledgments does the whole *world* of *penitent sinners* owe; what ardent returns of love, will a whole *heaven* of *glorified believers* pay, to such a Friend, Benefactor, and Deliverer!

Musing upon these melancholy objects, a faithful remembrance suggests from within.—“Must this sad *change*, succeed in me also? Am I to draw my last gasp; to become a breathless corpse; and *be* what I *deplore*? * Is there a time approaching, when this body shall be carried out upon the bier, and consigned to its clay-cold bed? while some kind acquaintance, perhaps, may drop one parting tear; and cry, Alas! my brother! Is the time approaching?” Nothing is more certain. A decree, much surer than the law of the Medes and Persians, has irrevocably determined the doom.

Should one of these ghastly figures burst from his confinement, and start up in frightful deformity before me;—should the haggard skeleton lift a clattering hand, and point it full in my view;—should it open the stiffened jaws, and, with a hoarse tremendous murmur, break this profound silence;—should it accost me as *Samuel’s* apparition addressed the trembling king, “The LORD shall deliver thee also into the hands of death: yet a little while, and thou shalt be with me:” †—The solemn warning,

* I pass, with melancholy state,
By all these solemn heaps of fate;
And think, as soft and sad I tread,
Above the venerable dead,
“Time was, like me, they life possess’d;
“And time will be, when I shall rest.”

Parnel.

† 1 Sam. xxviii. 19. On this place, the Dutch translator of the Meditations has added a note; to correct, very probably, what he supposes a mistake. On the same supposition, I presume, the compilers

warning, delivered in so striking a manner, must strongly impress my imagination; a message in thunder, would scarce sink deeper.——Yet, there is abundantly greater reason to be alarmed, by that express declaration of the LORD GOD Almighty, “Thou shalt surely die.” Well then, since sentence is passed; since I am a condemned man; and know not when the dead warrant may arrive: let me die to sin, and die to the world; before I die beneath the stroke of a righteous GOD. Let me employ the little uncertain interval of respite from execution; in preparing for a happier state, and a better life. That, when the fatal moment comes, and I am commanded to shut my eyes upon all things here below; I may open them again, to see my Saviour in the mansions above.

Since this body, which is so fearfully and wonderfully made, must fall to pieces in the grave: since I must soon resign all my bodily powers to darkness, inactivity, and corruption; let it be my constant care to use them well, while I possess them! —Let my *hands* be stretched forth to relieve the needy; and always be more “ready to give, than “to receive.”——Let my *knees* bend, in deepest humiliation, before the throne of grace: while my *eyes* are cast down to the earth, in penitential confusion; or devoutly looking up to heaven, for pardoning mercy! In every friendly interview, let the “law of kindness dwell on my *lips* ;” or rather, if the seriousness of my acquaintance permits, let the gospel of peace flow from my tongue. O! that

pilgrims of our rubric ordered the last verse of Eccles. xlv. to be omitted in the daily service of the church. But that the sentiment, hinted above, is strictly true; that it was *שמואל הנא Samuel himself*, (not an infernal spirit personating the prophet,) who appeared to the female necromancer at Endor; appeared, not in compliance with any diabolical incantation, but in pursuance of the divine commission; this, I think, is fully proved in the Historical Account of the Life of David, vol. 1. chap. 23.

that I might be enabled, in every public concourse, to lift up my voice like a trumpet ; and pour abroad a more joyful sound, than its most melodious accents, in proclaiming the glad tidings of free salvation!—Be shut, my *ears*, resolutely shut, against the malevolent whispers of slander, and the contagious breath of filthy talking. But be swift to hear the instructions of Wisdom ; be all attention, when your REDEEMER speaks ; imbibe the precious truths ; and convey them carefully to the heart.—Carry me, my *feet*, to the temple of the LORD ; to the beds of the sick ; and houses of the poor.—May all my members, devoted intirely to my divine Master, be the willing instruments of promoting his glory.

Then, ye embalmers, you may spare your pains : these works of faith, and labours of love ; these shall be my *spices* and *perfumes*. Enwrapped in these, I would lay me gently down, and sleep sweetly in the blessed JESUS ; hoping, that GOD will “ give commandment concerning my bones ; ” and one day fetch them up from the dust, as silver from the furnace, purified, “ I say not, seven times, “ but seventy times seven.”

Here, my contemplation took wing : and, in an instant, allighted in the garden, adjoining to mount *Calvary*. Having viewed the abode of my deceased fellow creatures ; methought, I longed to see the place, where our LORD lay.—And, O ! what a marvellous spectacle was once exhibited, in this memorable sepulchre ! HE, “ who clothes himself “ with light, as with a garment ; and walks upon “ the wings of the wind ; ” * HE was pleased to wear

* The sacred scriptures, speaking of the supreme Being, say—
“ He walketh upon the waves of the sea ; ” to denote his unconquerable power, Job ix. 8.—“ He walketh in the circuit of “ heaven ; ” to express the immensity of his presence, Job xxii. 14.
“ He

wear the habiliments of *mortality*, and dwell among the *prostrate* dead.—Who can repeat the wonderful truth, too often? who can dwell upon the transporting theme, too long? HE, who sits in-throned in glory, and diffuses bliss among all the heavenly hosts; He was once a pale and bloody corpse, and pressed this little spot.

O death! how great was thy triumph in that hour! Never did thy gloomy realms contain *such* a prisoner before—*Prisoner*, did I say? No, He was more than conqueror. He arose, far more mightily than *Sampson*, from a transient slumber; broke down the gates, and demolished the strongholds, of those dark dominions—And this, O mortals, this is your only *consolation* and *security*, JESUS has trod the dreadful path, and smoothed it for your passage.—JESUS, sleeping in the chambers of the tomb, has brightened the dismal mansion; and left an inviting odour, in those beds of dust. The dying JESUS, (never let the comfortable truth depart from your minds! the dying JESUS) is your sure *protection*, your unquestionable *passport*, through the territories of the grave. Believe in him; and they shall prove a “high way to
“*Sion*;

——“He walketh upon the wings of the wind;” to signify the amazing swiftness of his operations, Psal. civ. 3.—In which last phrase, there is, I think, an elegance and emphasis, not taken notice of by our commentators, and yet unequalled in any writer.—Not, He *fieth*; He *runneth*; but, He *walketh*: and that on the *very wings* of the wind; on the most impetuous of elements, roused into its utmost rage, and sweeping along with inconceivable rapidity.—A tumult in nature, not to be described, is the *composed* and *sedate* work of the DEITY. A speed not be measured, is (with reverence I use the expression, and to comport with our low methods of conception) the *solemn* and *majestic foot-pace* of JEHOVAH.—How *flat* are the following lines, even in the great master of lyric song,

*Ocyor cervix, & agente nimbes,
Ocyor Euro;*

when compared with this inimitable stroke of divine poetry!——
He *walketh* upon the wings of the wind.

“*Sion* ;” shall transmit you safe to paradise. Believe in him ; and you shall be no losers, but unspeakable gainers, by your dissolution. For hear what the oracle of heaven says, upon this important point : “ Who so believeth in Me, shall never “ die.”*——What sublime, and emphatical language, is this ! thus much, at least, it must import——“ The nature of that last change, shall be “ surprisingly altered, for the better. It shall no “ longer be *inflicted*, as a punishment ; but rather “ be *vouchsafed*, as a blessing. To such persons, “ it shall come attended, with such a train of benefits : as will render it a kind of happy impriety, to call it dying. Dying ! No ; ’tis then “ they *truly* begin to *live*. Their exit, is the end “ of their frailty, and their entrance upon perfection. Their last groan, is the prelude to life and “ immortality.”

O ye timorous souls, that are terrified at the sound of the passing bell, that turn pale at the sight of an opened grave ; and can scarce behold a coffin, or a skull, without a shuddering horror : Ye that are *in bondage* to the grisly tyrant, and tremble at the shaking of his iron rod ; cry mightily to the father of your spirits, for *faith* in his dear Son. Faith, will free you from your slavery.† Faith, will embolden you to tread on (this fiercest

• John xi. 26.

† Death’s terror is the mountain *faith* removes :

’Tis *faith* disarms destruction.——

Believe, and look with triumph on the tomb.

These, and some other quotations, I am proud to borrow from the Night-Thoughts, especially from Night the Fourth. In which, energy of language, sublimity of sentiment, and the most exquisite beauties of poetry, are the *least* perfections to be admired. Almost every line glows with devotion ; rises into the most exalted apprehensions of the adorable Redeemer ; and is animated with the most lively faith in his all-sufficient mediation. The author of this excellent performance has the peculiar felicity of ennobling all the strength of style, and every delicacy of imagination, with the grand and

fiercest of) serpents. *——Old *Simeon*, clasping the child *JESUS* in the arms of his flesh, and the glorious Mediator in the arms of his faith, departs with tranquility and peace. The bitter persecutor *Saul*, having won *CHRIST*; being found in *CHRIST*; longs to be dismissed from cumbrous clay, and kindles into rapture at the prospect of dissolution.† Methinks, I see another of *IMMANUEL*'s followers, trusting in his Saviour; leaning on his beloved; go down to the silent shades, with composure and alacrity.‡——In this powerful name, an innumerable company of sinful creatures have set up their banners; and “overcome through the blood of the Lamb.” Authorised by the Captain of thy salvation, *thou* also mayst set thy feet upon the neck of this king of terrors. Furnished with this antidote, *thou* also mayst play around the hole of the asp, and put thy undaunted hand on this cockatrice-den.§ Thou mayst feel the viper fastening to thy mortal part, and *fear* no evil: || thou shalt one day shake it off by a joyful resurrection, and *suffer* no harm.

Resurrection! that cheering word eases my mind of an anxious thought, and solves a most momentous question. I was going to ask; “Wherefore do all these corpses lie here, in this abject condition? Is this their final state? Has death conquered? and will the tyrant hold captivity captive? How long wilt thou forget them, O LORD? For ever?”—No, saith the voice from heaven; the

and momentous truths of Christianity. These thoughts give the highest entertainment to the fancy, and impart the noblest improvement to the mind. They not only refine our taste, but prepare us for death, and ripen us for glory. I never take up this admirable piece, but I am ready to cry out—*Tecum vivere amem, tecum obeam libens*; i. e. “Inspire me with such a spirit, and life shall be delightful, nor death itself unpleasant.”

* Luke x. 19.

† Phil. i. 23. 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

‡ 2 Pet. i. 14.

§ Isa. xi. 8.

|| Acts xxviii. 35.

the word of divine revelation; *the righteous* are all "prisoners of hope."* There is an hour, (an awful secret that, and known only to all-foreseeing wisdom,) an appointed hour, there is, when an act of grace will pass the great seal above, and give them an universal discharge; a general delivery from the abodes of corruption.—Then, shall the LORD JESUS descend from heaven, with the shout of the archangel, and the trump of GOD. *Destruction* itself shall hear his call, and the obedient *grave* give up her dead. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, they shake off the sleep of ten thousand years; and spring forth, like the bounding roe, to "meet their LORD in the air."

And O! with what cordial congratulations, what transporting endearments, do the soul and body, those affectionate companions, re-unite! but, with how much greater demonstrations of kindness are they *both* received, by their compassionate Redeemer! The Ancient of days, who comes in the clouds of heaven, is their friend; their father; their bridegroom. He comes with irresistible power and infinite glory; but they have nothing to fear from his majestic appearance. Those *tremendous solemnities*, which spread desolation and astonishment through the universe? serve only to inflame their love and heighten their hopes. The Judge, the awful Judge, amidst all his magnificence and splendor, vouchsafes to confess their names; vouchsafes to commemorate their fidelity, before all the inhabitants of the skies, and the whole assembled world.

Hark! the thunders are hushed. See, the lightnings cease their rage. The angelic armies stand in silent suspense. The whole race of *Adam*, is wrapped up in pleasing, or anxious expectation.—And, now, that adorable person, whose favour is better than life, whose acceptance is a crown of glory;
lifts

* Zech. ix. 12.

lifts up the light of his countenance upon the righteous. He speaks; and what ravishing words proceeded from his gracious lips! what ecstasies of delight, they enkindle in the breasts of the faithful!

—"I accept you, O my people! ye are they, that
 "believed in my name. Ye are they, that renounc-
 "ed *yourselves*, and *are complete in me*. I see no
 "spot or blemish in you; for ye are washed in my
 "blood, and clothed with my righteousness. Re-
 "newed by my Spirit, ye have glorified me on
 "earth, and have been faithful unto death. Come,
 "then, ye servants of holiness, enter into the joy
 "of your LORD. Come, ye children of light;
 "ye blessed of my Father; receive the *kingdom*,
 "that shall never be removed; wear the *crown*,
 "which fadeth not away: and enjoy *pleasures* for
 "evermore!"

Then, it will be one of the smallest privileges of the righteous, that they shall languish no more; that sickness will never again shew her pale countenance, in their dwellings.* *Death itself* will be "swallowed up in victory." That fatal javelin: which has drank the blood of monarchs, and finds its way to the hearts of all the sons of *Adam*; shall be utterly broken. That enormous scythe, which has struck empires from their roots, and swept ages and generations into oblivion; shall lie by in perpetual uselessness. *Sin* also, which filled thy quiver, thou insatiate archer!—*Sin*, which strung thy arm with resistless vigour, which pointed all thy shafts with inevitable destruction—*sin*, will then be done away. Whatever is *frail* or *depraved*, will be thrown off with our grave-clothes. All to come is perfect

* Isaiah, speaking of the new Jerusalem, mentions this, as one of its immunities: "The inhabitants thereof shall no more say, 'I am sick.'" Another clause, in its royal charter, runs thus: "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain." Isa. xxxiii. 24. Rev. xxi. 4.

perfect holiness, and consummate happiness; the term of whose continuance is eternity.

O eternity! *eternity!* How are our boldest, our strongest thoughts, lost and overwhelmed in thee! Who can set landmarks, to limit thy dimensions; or find plumbets, to fathom thy depths? *Arithmeticians* have figures, to compute all the progressions of time. *Astronomers* have instruments, to calculate the distances of the planets. But what numbers can state, what lines can gauge, the lengths and breadths of eternity? "It is higher than heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? the measure thereof is longer than earth, broader than the sea."*

Mysterious, mighty existence! A sum, not to be lessened by the largest *deductions!* an extent, not to be contracted by all possible *diminutions!* None can truly say, after the most prodigious waste of ages; "so much of eternity is gone." For when millions of centuries are elapsed, it is but just commencing; and, when millions more have run their ample round, it will be no nearer ending. Yea, when ages, numerous as the bloom of spring; increased by the herbage of summer: both augmented by the leaves of autumn; and all multiplied by the drops of rain, which drown the winter—when these, and ten thousand times ten thousand more—more than can be represented by any similitude, or imagined by any conception—when all these are revolved and finished; eternity, vast, boundless, amazing eternity, will *only be beginning.*

What a pleasing, yet awful thought is this! Full of delight, and full of dread. O! may it alarm our fears; quicken our hopes; and animate all our *endeavours!* Since we are soon to launch into this endless and inconceivable state; let us give all diligence to secure our entrance into bliss.—*Now*, let us give all diligence; because there is no alteration, in the scenes

* Job xi. 8, 9.

scenes of futurity. The wheel never turns: all is steadfast and immoveable beyond the grave. Whether we are then seated on the throne, or stretched on the rack; a seal will be set to our condition, by the hand of everlasting mercy, or inflexible justice.—The *saints* always rejoice amidst the smiles of heaven; their harps are perpetually tuned; their triumphs admit of no interruption.—The ruin of the *wicked* is irremediable. The fatal sentence, once passed is never to be repealed. No hope of exchanging their doleful habitations. But all things bear the same dismal aspect, for ever and ever.

The *wicked*—my mind recoils, * at the apprehension of their misery. It has studiously waved the fearful subject; and seems unwilling to pursue it, even now.—But it is better to reflect upon it, for a few minutes; than to endure it, to eternal ages. Perhaps, the consideration of their aggravated misery, may be *profitably terrible*; may teach me more highly to prize the Saviour, who “delivers from “going down into the bottomless pit:” may drive me, like the avengers sword, to this only city of refuge, for obnoxious sinners.

The wicked seem to lie here, like malefactors in a deep and strong dungeon; reserved against the day of trial.—“*Their departure* was without peace.” Clouds of horror, sat louring upon their closing eye-lids; most sadly foreboding the “blackness of “darkness for ever.” When the last sickness seized their frame, and the inevitable change advanced; when they saw the fatal arrow, fitting to the strings; saw the deadly archer, aiming at their heart: and felt the envenomed shaft, fastened in their vitals—Good God! what fearfulness came upon them! what horrible dread overwhelmed them!

* ——— *Animus meminisse horret, luctaque refugit.* Virg.
Though my shock'd soul recoils, my tongue shall tell,
But with a bleeding heart,————

them ! How did they stand shuddering and aghast, upon the tremendous precipice ! excessively afraid to plunge into the abyss of eternity, yet utterly unable to maintain their standing on the verge of life.

O ! what pale reviews, what startling prospects, conspire to augment their sorrows !—They look *backward*, and behold ! a most melancholy scene ! sins unrepented of ! mercy slighted ; and the day of grace ending !—They look *forward*, and nothing presents itself, but the righteous Judge ; the dreadful tribunal ; and a most solemn reckoning.—They roll *around* their affrighted eyes, on attending friends. If accomplices in debauchery ; it sharpens their anguish, to consider this farther aggravation of their guilt ; that they have not sinned alone, but drawn others into the snare. If religious acquaintance ; it strikes a fresh gash into their hearts, to think of never seeing them any more, but only at an unapproachable distance, separated by the unpassable gulph.

At last, perhaps, they begin to *pray*. Finding no other possible way of relief, they are constrained to apply unto the Almighty. With trembling lips, and a faltering tongue, they cry unto that sovereign Being, “ who kills and makes alive.”——But why have they *deferred*, so long deferred their addresses to GOD ? Why have they *despised* all his counsels ; and stood incorrigible, under his incessant reproofs ? how often have they been forewarned of these terrors ; and most importunately intreated, “ to seek the LORD, while he might be found ? ”——I wish, they may obtain mercy at the eleventh, at the last hour. I wish, they may be snatched from the jaws ; the opened, the gaping, the almost closing jaws of damnation. But alas ! who can tell, whether affronted Majesty, will lend an ear to their complaint ? whether, the holy One will work a miracle of grace, in behalf of
such

such transgressors? He may, for aught any mortal knows, " laugh at their calamity, and mock when " their fear cometh."

Thus they lie, groaning out the poor remains of life; their limbs bathed in sweat; their heart struggling with convulsive throes; pains insupportable throbbing through every pulse; and innumerable darts of agony transfixing their conscience.

" In that dread moment, how the frantic soul
 " Raves round the walls of her clay tenement;
 " Runs to each avenue, and shrieks for help;
 " But shrieks in vain! How wishfully she looks
 " On all she's leaving, now no longer hers!
 " A little longer, yet a little longer,
 " O! might she stay, to wash away her crimes,
 " And fit her for her passage! Mournful sight!
 " Her very eyes weep blood; and every groan
 " She heaves, is big with horror: but the foe,
 " Like a staunch murd'rer, steady to his purpose,
 " Pursues her close thro' ev'ry lane of life,
 " Nor misses once the track; but presses on;
 " till forc'd at last to the tremendous verge,
 " At once she sinks."*————

If *this* be the *end* of the ungodly, " My soul,
 " come not thou into their secret! unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united!"——
 How awfully accomplished is that prediction of inspired wisdom! *Sin*, though seemingly sweet in the commission; yet at the last, " it biteth like a
 " serpent, and stingeth like an adder."—Fly therefore from the tents, O! fly from the ways of such wretched men.

Happy dissolution! were this the period of their woes. But, alas! all these tribulations, are only
 " the beginning of sorrows;" a small drop only
 from

* See a valuable poem, entitled *The Graves*:

from that "cup of trembling," which is mingled for their future portion. No sooner has the last pang dislodged their reluctant souls, but they are hurried into the presence of an injured angry God, Not under the conducting care of beneficent angels, but exposed to the insults of accursed spirits; who lately *tempted* them, now *upbraid* them, and will for ever *torment* them. Who can imagine their confusion and distress; when they stand, guilty and inexcusable, before their incensed Creator? they are received with frowns. The God that made them, has no "mercy on them."* The Prince of Peace, rejects them with abhorrence. He consigns them over to chains of darkness, and receptacles of despair; against the severer doom, and more public infamy of the great day.—Then all the vials of wrath will be emptied upon these wretched creatures. The law they have violated, and the gospel they have slighted; the power they have defied, and the goodness they have abused; will all get themselves honour in their exemplary destruction. Then, God, the God to whom vengeance belongeth, will draw the arrow to the very head, and set them as the mark of his inexorable displeasure.

Resurrection will be no privilege to them; but immortality itself, their everlasting curse. Would they not bless the grave, "that land where all things are forgotten;" and wish to lie eternally hid, in its deepest gloom? but, the dust refuses, to *conceal* their persons; or to draw a *veil* over their practices. They also must awake; must arise; must appear at the bar; and meet the judge. A judge, before whom "the pillars of heaven tremble, and the earth melts away." A judge, once long-suffering, and very compassionate; but now unalterably determined, to teach stubborn offenders
—what

* Isaiah xxvii. 11.

—what it is to *provoke* the omnipotent Godhead: what it is, to *trample* upon the blood of his Son: and offer *despite* to all the gracious overtures of his Spirit.

O! the perplexity! the distraction, that must seize the impenitent rebels, when they are summoned to the great tribunal!—What will they do, in this day of severe visitation? this day of final decision!—Where? how? whence can they find help?—To which of the saints will they turn? whither betake themselves, for shelter or for succour? alas! it is all in vain; it is all too late—Friends and acquaintance know them no more. Men and angels abandon them, to their approaching doom. Even the Mediator, the MEDIATOR, himself, deserts them in this dreadful hour.—To *fly*, will be impracticable; to *justify* themselves, still more impossible: and now, to make any *supplications*, utterly unavailable.

Behold! the books are opened. The secrets of all hearts are disclosed. The hidden things of darkness are brought to light. How empty, how ineffectual *now*, are all those refined artifices, with which hypocrites imposed upon their fellow-creatures, and preserved a character in the sight of men! The jealous God, who has been about their path, and about their bed, and espied out all their ways, sets before them the things that they have done. They cannot answer him one in a thousand, nor stand in the awful judgment. “The heavens reveal their iniquities, and the earth rises up against them.”* They are *speechless* with guilt, and *stigmatised* with infamy, before all the armies of the sky, and all the nations of the redeemed.—What a favour would they esteem it, to hide their ashamed heads in the bottom of the ocean, or even to be buried, beneath the ruins of the tottering world!

If

* Job xx. 27.

If the contempt, poured upon them, be thus insupportable ; how will their hearts endure, when the *sword* of infinite indignation is unsheathed ; and fiercely waved, around their defenceless heads ; or pointed directly, at their naked breasts ? How must the wretches scream with violent amazement, and rend the very heavens with their cries, when the *right-aiming thunderbolts* go abroad ! go abroad, with a dreadful commission, to drive them from the kingdoms of glory ; and plunge them—not into the sorrows of a moment, or the tortures of an hour—but into all the restless agonies, of unquenchable and everlasting despair.

Misery of miseries ! too shocking for reflection to dwell upon. But if so dismal to *foresee* ; and that at a distance ; together with some comfortable expectation of escaping it—O ! how bitter, inconceivably bitter, to *bear* ; without any intermission ; or any mitigation ; through hopeless and eternal ages ! *

Who has any bowels of pity ?—who has any sentiments of compassion ? who has any tender concern for his fellow-creatures ? who ? in GOD's name, and for CHRIST's sake, let him shew it ; by warning every man, and beseeching every man, to *seek* the LORD while he may be *found* : to throw down the arms of rebellion, before the act of indemnity expires : submissively to adore the Lamb, while he holds out the golden sceptre.—Here, let us act the friendly part to mankind. Here, let the whole force of our *benevolence* exert itself ; in exhorting relations, acquaintance, neighbours, whomsoever we may probably influence, to take the wings of

- Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
And rest can never dwell ; hope never comes,
That comes to all : but torture without end
Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed
With ever-burning sulphur unconsum'd.

Milt.

of *faith* unfeigned ; of *repentance* undelayed ; and flee away from this wrath to come.

UPON the whole ; what stupendous discoveries are these ! Lay them up in a faithful remembrance, O my soul. Recollect them, with the most serious attention ; when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. When thou walkest, receive them for thy *companions* ; when thou talkest listen to them as thy *prompters* ; and whatever thou dost, consult them as thy *directors*.—Influenced by these considerations, thy views will greaten ; thy affections be exalted ; and thou thyself raised above the tantalising power of perishing things. Duly mindful of these, it will be the sum of thy *desires*, and the scope of thy *endeavours*, to gain the approbation of that sovereign Being ; who will then fill the throne, and pronounce the decisive sentence. Thou wilt see nothing worth a wish, * in comparison of having his will for thy rule ; his glory for thy aim ; and his Holy Spirit for thy ever actuating principle.

Wonder, O man, be lost in admiration, at those *prodigious events* which are coming upon the universe. Events, the greatness of which nothing finite can measure. Such as will cause whatever is considerable, or momentous, in the annals of all generations, to sink into littleness and nothing. Events (JESUS prepare us for their approach ; defend us when they take place !) big with the everlasting fates of all the living and all the dead.—I must see the graves cleaving, the sea teeming, and swarms unsuspected, crowds unnumbered, yea multitudes of *thronging nations*, rising from both.—

I

* Great day of dread, decision, and despair !
At thought of thee, each sublunary wish
I lets go its eager grasp, and quits the world.

Night Thoughts.

I must see the world in flames; must stand at the dissolution of all terrestrial things; and be an attendant on the *burial* of *nature*.—I must see the vast expanse of the sky, wrapt up like a scroll; and the incarnate GOD, issuing forth from light inaccessible, with ten thousand times ten thousand angels, to judge both *men* and *devils*.—I must see the curtain of time drop; see all eternity disclosed to view; and enter upon a state of being, that will never, never, have an end.

And ought I not (let the vainest imagination determine; ought I not) to try the sincerity of my faith, and take heed to my ways? Is there an *inquiry*, is there a *care*, of greater, of equal, of comparable importance? Is not this an infinitely pressing call, to see that my loins are girded about, my lamp trimmed, and myself dressed for the bridegroom's appearance? That, washed in the fountain opened in my Saviour's side, and clad with the marriage garment wove by his obedience; I may be found in peace, unblameable, and unproveable—Otherwise, how shall I stand with boldness, when the stars of heaven fall from their orbs? How shall I come forth *erect* and *courageous*, when the earth itself *reels* to and fro like a drunkard? * How shall I look up with joy, and see my salvation drawing nigh, when the hearts of millions and millions fail for fear?

Now, Madam, lest my meditations set in a cloud, and leave any unpleasing gloom upon your mind; let me once more turn to the *brightening prospects* of the righteous. A view of them, and their delightful expectations, may serve to exhilarate the thoughts which have been musing upon melancholy subjects, and hovering about the edges of infernal darkness. Just as a spacious field, arrayed in
cheerful

• Isaiah xxiv. 10.

cheerful green, relieves and reinvigorates the eye; which has fatigued itself by poring upon some minute, or gazing upon some glaring object.

The righteous seem to lie by, in the bosom of the earth, as a *wary pilot* in some well sheltered creek; till all the storms, which infest this lower world, are blown over. Here they enjoy safe anchorage; are in no danger of *foundering*, amidst the waves of prevailing iniquity; or of being shipwrecked on the rocks of any powerful temptation. But, ere long, we shall behold them hoisting their flag of hope; riding before a sweet gale of atoning merit and redeeming love; till they make, with all the sails of an assured faith, the blessed ports of eternal life.

Then, may the honoured friend to whom I am writing, rich in good works, rich in heavenly tempers, but inexpressibly richer in her Saviour's righteousness; O! may she enter the harbour, like a gallant *stately vessel*, returned successful and victorious from some grand expedition, with acclamations, honour, and joy! while my *little bark*, attendant on the solemnity, and a partaker of the triumph, glides humbly after: and both rest together in the haven—the wish'd-for blissful haven, of perfect security, and everlasting repose.

48.

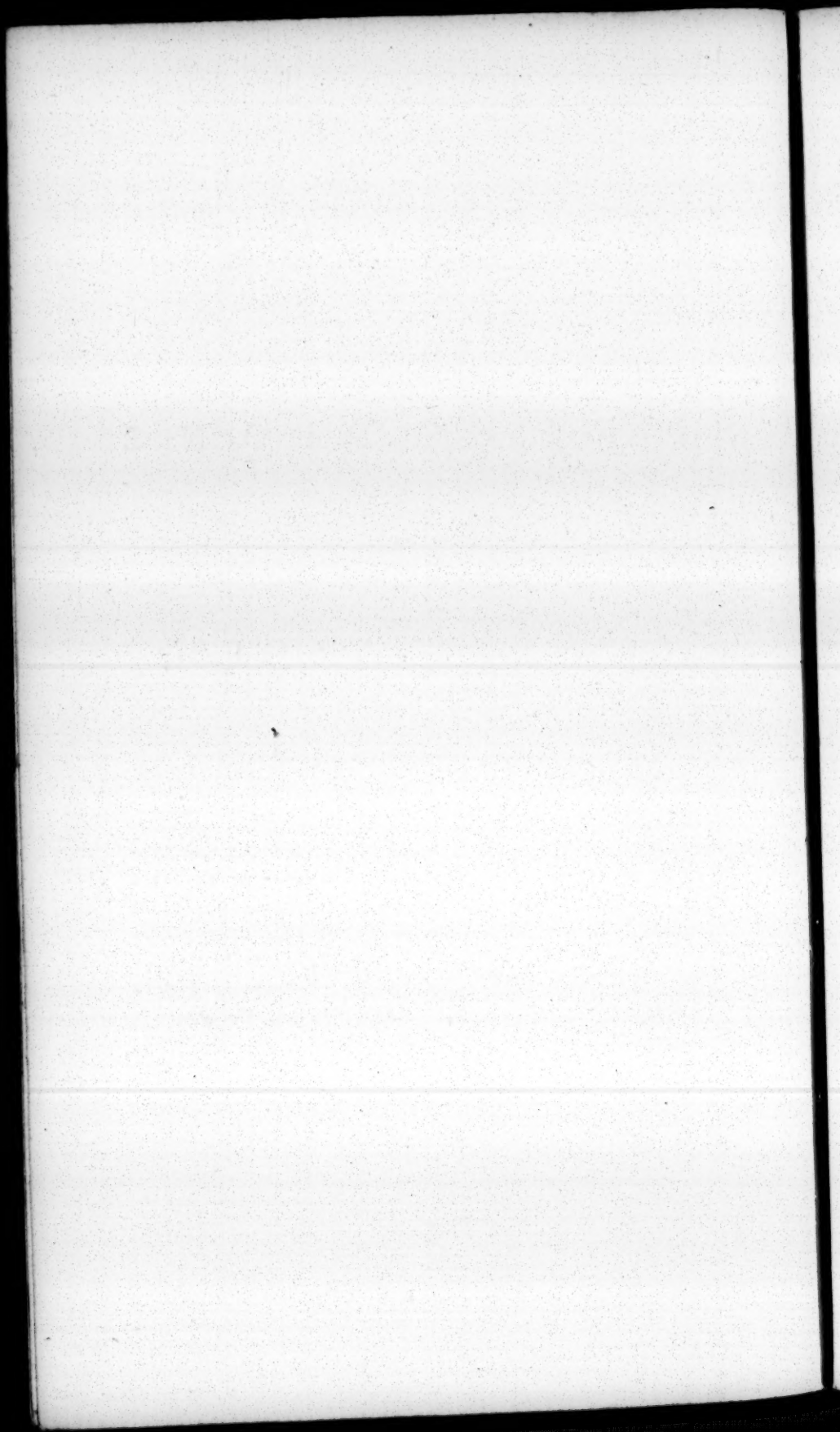
R E F L E C T I O N S

ON A

FLOWER-GARDEN.

“ I look upon the pleasure which we take in a *garden*, as one of the
“ most innocent delights in human life. A *garden* was the habi-
“ tation of our first parents before the fall. It is naturally apt to fill
“ the mind with calmness and tranquility, and to lay all its turbu-
“ lent passions at rest. It gives us a great insight into the contriv-
“ ance and wisdom of Providence, and suggests innumerable subjects
“ for meditation.”

Spect. Vol. vii. No. 477.



R E F L E C T I O N S

O N A

FLOWER-GARDEN.

In a LETTER to a LADY.

MADAM,

SOME time ago, my meditations took a turn among the *tombs*. They visited the awful and melancholy mansions of the dead;* and you was pleased to favour them with your attention.—— May I, now, beg the honour of your company, in a more inviting and delightful excursion? In a beautiful *flower-garden*, where I lately walked; and at once regaled the sense, and indulged the fancy.

It was early in a *summer morning*. When the air was cool; the earth moist; the whole face of the creation

* “Discourses on the *vanity* of the creature, which represent the barrenness of every thing in this world, and its incapacity of producing any solid or substantial happiness, are useful.—— Those speculations also, which shew the *bright side* of things, and lay forth those innocent entertainments, which are to be met with among the several objects that encompass us, are no less beneficial.” *Spect.* Vol. v. No. 393. Upon the plan of these observations, the preceding and following reflections are formed.

creation fresh and gay. The noisy world was scarce awake. *Business* had not quite shook off his sound sleep; and *riot* had but just reclined his giddy head. All was serene: all was still: every thing tended to inspire tranquility of mind, and invite to serious thought.

Only the wakeful *lark* had left her nest, and was mounted on high, to salute the opening day. Elevated in air, she seemed to call the laborious husbandman to his toil, and all her fellow songsters to their notes.—Earliest of birds, said I, companion of the dawn, may I always rise at thy voice! Rise, to offer the matin song; and adore that beneficent Being, “who maketh the outgoings of “the morning and evening to rejoice.”

How charming to rove abroad, at this sweet *hour of prime*! to enjoy the calm of nature; to tread the dewy lawns; and taste the unruffled freshness of the air!

“Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet,
“With charm of earliest birds.”

What a pleasure do the sons of *sloth* lose! Little, ah! little is the sluggard sensible, how delicious an entertainment he foregoes, for the poorest of all animal gratifications.*

The

* See! how revelation and reason, the scriptures and the classics, unanimously exhort to this most beneficial practice. They both invite us to *early rising*, by the most engaging motives, and the most alluring representations.

“Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge
“in the villages. Let us get up early to the vineyards: let us see
“if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the
“pomegranates bud forth.” Cant. vii. 11, 12.

*Luciferi primo cum fidere, frigida rura
Carpamus: dum mane novum, dum gramina canent,
Et ros in tenera pecori gratissimus herba est.*

VIRG. Georg. III.

The greyness of the dawn decays gradually. Abundance of ruddy streaks tinge the fleeces of the firmament. Till at length, the *dappled* aspect of the east is lost, in one ardent and boundless *blush*.—Is it the surmise of imagination, or do the skies really redden with shame; to see so many supinely stretched, on their drowsy pillows?—Shall man be lost, in luxurious ease? shall man waste these precious hours, in idle slumbers? while the vigorous sun is up, and going on his Maker's errand? while all the feathered choir are hymning the Creator, and paying their homage in harmony?—No. Let *him* heighten the melody of the tuneful tribes, by adding the rational strains of devotion. Let *him* improve the fragrant oblations of nature, by mingling, with the rising odours, the more refined breath of praise.

It is natural for man to look upward; to throw his first glance upon the objects that are above him.

“ Straight towards heav'n my wondering eyes I
turn'd,

“ And gaz'd awhile the ample sky.

Prodigious theatre! where lightnings dart their fire, and thunders utter their voice. Where tempests spend their rage, and worlds unnumbered roll at large!—O the *greatness* of that mighty hand; which meteth out this amazing circumference, with a span! O the *immensity* of that wonderful Being; before whom this unmeasurable extent, is no more than a point!—And O (thou pleasing thought!) the unsearchable *riches* of that *mercy*,
which

When now the morning-star but dimly dawns,
Lead them to taste the coolness of the lawns;
When hoar with virgin-dews the grass appears,
Haste, let them drink the morning's earliest tears.

which is "greater than the heavens!"* is more enlarged and extensive, in its gracious exercise; than these illimitable tracts of air, and sea, and firmament which pardons crimes of the most enormous size, and the most horrid aggravations; pardons them, in consideration of the Redeemer's atonement, with perfect freeness, and the utmost readiness! more readily, if it were possible, than this *all surrounding expanse* admits, within its circuit, a ridge of mountains, or even a grain of sand.

Come hither then, ye *awakened*, trembling sinners. Come, weary and heavy laden with a sense of your iniquities. † Condemn yourselves. Renounce all reliance on any thing of your own. "Let your trust be in the tender mercy of GOD, "for ever and ever."

"In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun." ‡
—Behold him coming forth, from the chambers of the east. See! the clouds, like floating curtains, are

* Psal. cviii. 4.

† The lines which follow are admirably descriptive of the spirit and practice hinted above. In them desire *pants*; prayer *wrestles*; and faith, as it were, *grasps* the prize. I take leave to transplant them into this place; and I could wish them a better, a more conspicuous situation than either their *new* or their *native* soil. Their native soil is no other than *the lamentation of a sinner*, written by Mr. Sternhold. Notwithstanding the unpromising genius of the performance, I think we may challenge the greatest masters to produce any thing more spirited and importunate; more full of nature, or more flushed with life.

"Mercy, good LORD, mercy I crave!

"This is the total sum;

"For mercy, LORD, is all my suit;

"LORD, let thy mercy come."

The short sentences—not a single copulative—the frequent repetition of the divine name—the almost incessant reiteration of the blessing so passionately desired, and inexpressibly needed.—This is the genuine language of ardour; these are beauties obvious to every eye; and cannot fail, either to please the *judicious* taste, or to edify the *gracious* heart.

‡ Psal. xix. 4.

are thrown back at his approach. With what *resplendent majesty* does he walk abroad! How transcendantly bright is his countenance; shedding day and inexhaustible light, through the universe! Is there a scene, though finished by the most elaborate and costly refinements of art, “comparable “to these illustrious solemnities of opening sunshine? Before *these*, all the studied pageantry of “the theatre; the glittering œconomy of an assembly; or even the heightened ornaments of a “royal palace; hide their diminished heads, and “shrink into nothing.”——I have read of a person, so struck with the splendours of this noble luminary; that he imagined himself made on purpose to contemplate its glories. O! that Christians would adopt his persuasion, and transfer it to the *Sun of righteousness*! Thus applied, it would cease to be a chimerical notion, and become a most important truth. For sure I am, it is the supreme happiness of the eternal state; and therefore may well be the ruling concern of this present life; “to know the only true GOD, and JESUS “CHRIST whom he hath sent.”——Nor do I stand alone in this opinion. The very best judge of whatever is valuable in science, or perfective of our nature; a judge, who formed his taste on the maxims of paradise, and received the finishings of his education in the third heavens; this judge determines to “know nothing but JESUS CHRIST, “and him crucified.” He possessed, in his own person, the finest, the most admired accomplishments; yet pronounces them no better than *dung*, in comparison of the supereminent excellency of this saving knowledge.*

Methinks, I discern a thousand admirable properties in the sun. It is, certainly, the best material emblem of the Creator. There is more of GOD
in

* Το υπερεχον της γνωσεως. Phil. iii. 7, 8.

in its *lustre*, *energy*, and *usefulness*, than in any other visible being. To worship it as a deity, was the least inexcusable of all the heathen idolatries. One scarce can wonder, that fallen reason should mistake so fair a *copy*, for the adorable *original*. No comparison, in the whole book of sacred wisdom, pleases me more; than that which resembles the blessed JESUS, to yonder regent of the day; * who now advances on his azure road, to scatter light and dispense gladness through the nations.

What were all the realms of the world, but a *dungeon* of *darkness*, without the beams of the sun? All their fine scenes, hid from our view; lost in obscurity.—In vain, we roll around our eyes, in the midnight gloom. In vain, we strive to behold the features of amiable nature. Turn whither we will, no form or comeliness appears. All seems a dreary waste; an undistinguished chaos. Till the returning hours, have unbarred the gates of light, and let forth the morn.—Then, what a prospect opens! the heavens are paved with azure, and strewn with roses. A variety of the liveliest verdurs array the plains. The flowers put on a glow of the richest colours. The whole creation stands forth, dressed in all the charms of beauty. The ravished eye looks round, and wonders.

And what had been the condition of our intellectual nature, without the great Redeemer, and his *divine revelation*? Alas! what absurd and unworthy apprehensions, did the *Pagan* sages form of GOD! What idle dreams, what childish conjectures, were their doctrines of a future state?—How did the bulk, even of that favoured nation, the *Jews*, weary themselves in very vanity, to obtain peace and reconciliation with their offended JEHOVAH! till JESUS arose upon our benighted minds,

* “Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise, with healing in his wings.” Mal. iv. 2.

minds, and brought life and immortality to light ; till HE arose, “ to enlighten the wretched Gentiles, “ and to be the glory of his people Israel.”

Now we no longer cry out, with a restless impatience, “ Where is GOD my maker ?” for we are allowed to contemplate the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, “ in “ the face of JESUS CHRIST.”——Now, we no longer inquire, with an unsatisfied solicitude, “ Which is the way to bliss ?” because JESUS has marked the *path*, by his shining example ; and left us an unerring *clue*, in his holy word.—Now, we have no more reason to proceed with misgiving hearts, in our journey to eternity ; or to ask anxiously, as we go ; “ Who will roll away the stone, “ and open the everlasting doors ? who will remove “ the flaming sword, and give us admission into the “ delights of paradise ?” For it is done, all done, by the Captain of our salvation. Sin he has *expiated*, by the unblemished sacrifice of himself.—The law he has *fulfilled*, by his perfect obedience. The sinner he *transforms*, by his sanctifying SPIRIT.—In a word, he hath both presented us with a *clear discovery* of good things to come, and administered to us an *abundant entrance* into the final enjoyment of them.

Whenever, therefore, we bless GOD for the circling seasons, and revolving day ; let us adore, thankfully adore him, for the *more precious* appearance of the Sun of righteousness, and his glorious gospel. Without which, we should have been groping, even to this hour, in spiritual darkness, and the shadow of death. Without which, we must have wandered in a maze of inextricable uncertainties ; and have “ stumbled upon the dark “ mountains” of error, till we fell into the bottomless pit of perdition.

Without that grand *enlivening* principle, what were this earth, but a lifeless mass ? a rude lump
of

of *inactive* matter? The trees could never break forth into leaves, nor the plants spring up into flowers. We should no more behold the meadows, mantled over with green; nor the valleys, standing thick with corn. Or, to speak in the beautiful language of a prophet; “No longer would the “fig-tree blossom, nor fruit be in the vine: the “labour of the olive would fail, and the fields “could yield no meat: the flocks must be cut off “from the fold, and there would be no herd in “the stalls.”*—The Sun darts its beams among all the vegetable tribes; and paints the spring, and enriches the autumn. This pierces to the roots of the vineyard and the orchard; and sets afloat those fermenting juices, which at length burst into floods of wine, or bend the boughs with a mellow load.—Nor are its favours confined to the *upper regions*; but distributed into the *deepest recesses* of creation. It penetrates the beds of metals, and finds its way to the place of the sapphires. It tinctures the seeds of gold, that are ripening into ore; and throws a brilliancy into the water of the diamond, that is hardening on its rock.—In short, the beneficial agency of this magnificent luminary, is inexpressible. It *beautifies*, and *impregnates*, universal nature. “There is nothing “hid from the heat thereof.”

Just in the same manner, were the rational world “dead in trespasses and sins,” without the reviving energy of JESUS CHRIST. He is “the resurrection and the life:” the overflowing fountain of the one, and the all powerful cause of the other. The second “Adam is a quickening Spirit,” and all his saints live through him. He shines upon their affections; and they shoot forth into heavenly graces, and abound in the fruits of righteousness.

Faith

Hab.

* *Hab.* iii. 17.

Faith unfeigned, and love undissembled, those noblest productions of the renewed nature, are the effect of *his* operation on the mind. Not so much as one divine disposition could spread itself, not one Christian habit unfold and flourish, without the kindly influence of *his* grace.

As there is no fruitfulness, so likewise no *cheerfulness* without the sun.*—When that auspicious sovereign of the day, diffuses the mildness of his morning splendor, he creates an universal festival. Millions of glittering insects awake into existence, and bask in his rays. The birds start from their slumbers, and pour their delighted souls, in harmony. The flocks, with bleating accents, hail the welcome blessing. The herds, in lowing murmurs, express their hoarser acclamations. The valleys ring with rural music; the hills echo back the artless strains. All that is vocal, joins in the general choir: all that has breath, exults in the cheering influence.—Whereas was that radiant orb extinguished, a tremendous gloom would ensue, and horror insupportable. Nay, let it only be *eclipsed* for a few minutes, and all nature assumes an air of *sadness*. The heavens are wrapt in fables, and put on a kind of mourning. The most sprightly animals hang down their dejected heads. The songsters of the grove are struck dumb. Howling beasts roam abroad for prey: ominous birds come forth and screech: the heart of man fails, or a sudden pang seizes the foreboding mind.—So when CHRIST hides away his face; when faith loses sight of that consolation of *Israel*; how *gloomy* are the prospects of the soul! Our GOD seems to be a consuming fire, and our sins cry loudly for vengeance. The thoughts

* “The sun, which is the great soul of the universe, and produces all the necessities of life, has a particular influence in *cheering* the mind of man, and making the heart *glad*.”

thoughts bleed inwardly; the Christian walks heavily. All without is irksome; all within is disconsolate.—Lift up then, most gracious JESUS, thou *nobler day-spring* from on high! O lift up the light of thy countenance, upon thy people! reveal the fullness of thy mediatorial sufficiency; make clear our title to this great salvation; and thereby impart

“What nothing earthly gives, or can destroy,
 “The soul’s calm sunshine, and the heart-felt
 “joy.”*

In one instance more, let me pursue the similitude. The sun, I observe, pours his lustre all *around*: to every *distance*, and in every *direction*. Profusely liberal of his gifts, he illuminates and cheers all the ends of the earth, and the whole compass of the skies. The east reddens, with his rising radiance; and the western hills, are gilded with his streaming splendors. The chilly regions of the north, are cherished by his genial warmth; while the southern tracts, glow with his fire.—Thus are the influences of the Sun of righteousness, *diffusive* and *unconfined*. The generations of old felt them; and generations yet unborn, will rejoice in them. The merits of his precious death extended to the first, and will be propagated to the last ages of mankind.—May they, ere long, visit the remotest climates, and darkest corners of the earth! Command thy gospel, blessed JESUS, thy everlasting gospel, to take the wings of the morning, and travel with yonder sun. Let it fly upon strong pinions among every people, nation, and language. That, where the heat scorches, and the cold freezes, thou mayest be known, confessed, and adored! that *strangers* to thy name, and *enemies* to thy

* Pope’s Ethic Ep.

thy doctrine, may be enlightened with the knowledge, and won to the love of thy truth! O! may that best of æras come; that wished for period advance; “*when* all the ends of the world shall remember themselves, and be turned unto the LORD; and all the kindreds of the nations worship before him!”*

From the heavens we retire to the earth.—Here, the drops of *dew*, like so many liquid crystals, † sparkle upon the eye. How *brilliant* and unfulfilled in their lustre! How little inferior to the proud stone, which irradiates a monarch’s crown! They want nothing but solidity and permanency, to equal them with the finest treasures of the jeweller’s casket.—But here, indeed, they are greatly deficient; short lived ornaments; possessed of little more, than a *momentary radiance*. The sun that lights them up, will soon melt them into air, or exhale them into vapours. Within another hour, we may “look for their place, and they shall be away.”—O! may every good resolution of mine, and of my flocks; may our united breathings after GOD, not be like these *transient decorations* of the morning; but like the substantial glory of the growing day! The one shines more and more with augmented splendors: while the other, having glittered gaily for a few moments, disappear and are lost.

How sensibly has this dew *refreshed* the vegetable kingdoms! The fervent heat of yesterday’s sun, had almost parched the face, and exhausted the sweets of nature. But what a sovereign restorative are these *cooling distillations* of the night! how they gladden, and invigorate, the languishing herbs!

Sprinkled

* Psal. xxii. 27.

† Now Morn, her rosy steps in th’ eastern clime
Adancing, sow’d the earth with *orient pearl*.

Sprinkled with these reviving drops, their verdure deepens; their bloom is new flushed; their fragrance, faint or intermitted, becomes potent and copious.—Thus does the ever blessed SPIRIT *revive* the drooping troubled conscience of a sinner. When that almighty Comforter sheds his sweet influence on the soul; displays the all-sufficient sacrifice of a divine Redeemer; and, “witnesses with “our spirit,” that we are *interested* in the Saviour, and, by this means, are *children* of GOD; then what a pleasing change ensues! Former anxieties are remembered no more. Every uneasy apprehension vanishes. Soothing hopes, and delightful expectations, succeed. The countenance drops its dejected mein; the eyes brighten with a lively cheerfulness; while the lips express the heart-felt satisfaction, in the language of thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.—In this sense, merciful GOD, “be as the dew unto Israel!” “pour upon “them the continual dew of thy blessing.” And O! let not my fleece be dry, while heavenly benediction descends upon all around.

Who can number these pearly drops? They hang on every hedge; they twinkle from every spray; and adorn the whole herbage of the field. Not a blade of grass, not a single leaf, but wears the watery pendants. So *vast* is the *profusion*, that it baffles the arithmetician’s art.—Here, let the benevolent mind contemplate and admire that emphatical scripture; which, from this elegant similitude, describes the *increase* of the *Messiah’s* kingdom. The royal prophet, speaking of CHRIST, and foretelling the success of his religion, has this remarkable expression; “The dew of thy birth is of the womb “of the morning.”* (*i. e.*) As the morning is the mother

* Psal. cx. 3. מרחם משהו לך טל ילדתך The most exact translation of this difficult passage is, I apprehend, as follows: *Præ rore uteri auroræ, tibi est ros juventutis vel prolis tuæ.* The dew of thy birth

mother of dews; produces them, as it were from a prolific womb; and scatters them, with the most lavish

birth is larger, more copious, than the dew which proceeds from the womb of the morning.——I cannot acquiesce in the new version: because that disjoins “the womb of the morning,” from “the dew of thy birth.” Whereas, they seem to have a clear affinity and a close connection. The womb of the morning is, with the utmost pertinency, applied to the conception and production of dews; agreeably to a delicate line in that great master of just description and lively painting, Mr. Thomson:

“The meek-ey’d morn appears, mother of dews.”

Summer.

We meet with a fine expression in the book of Job, which may serve to confirm this remark; may illustrate the propriety of the phrase used in this connection. “Hath the rain a father, or who hath begotten the drops of dew?” It seems the oriental writers delighted to represent the dew as a kind of birth, as the offspring of the morning. And if so, surely there could be no image in the whole compass of the universe better adapted to the Psalmist’s purpose: or more strongly significant of those multitudes of profelytes, which were “born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God;” by the powerful energy of his word and Spirit.——Upon this supposition, the whole verse describes,

The willing subjection,
The gracious accomplishments, } of Christ’s converts.
And the vast number,

q. d. “In the day of thy power,” when thy glorious gospel shall be published in the world, and accompanied with marvellous efficacy—In that memorable period, *thy people*, discontinuing the former oblations, commanded under the Mosaic law, shall devote *themselves* as so many living sacrifices to thy honour. Not constrained by force, but charmed with thy excellency, they shall come in *volunteers* to thy service, and be *free-will offerings* in thy church.——Neither shall they be *empty vines*, or bare professors; but shall walk in all the *beauties of holiness*, and bring forth such amiable fruit, as will adorn the doctrine they embrace.——What is still more desirable, they shall be as *numerous* as they are willing and holy. Born to thee in numbers immense and inconceivable; exceeding even the countless myriads of dew-drops which are begotten by the night, and issue from the womb of the recent morning.

By this interpretation, the text, I think, is cleared of its obscurity, and appears both truly sublime and perfectly just.

May I be pardoned the *digression*, and acquitted from *presumption*, if, on this occasion, I take leave to animadvert upon what seems harsh and unnatural in the common exposition of the last verse of this psalm. All the commentators (as many, at least, as I have consulted)

lavish abundance, over all the surface of the earth :
 “ so shall thy seed be, O thou everlasting Father !”

By

consulted) inform their readers, that to “ drink of the brook in
 “ the way, signifies, to undergo sufferings and death.” Which, in
 my opinion, is a construction extremely forced, and hardly sup-
 portable ; altogether remote from the import of such poetical forms
 of diction customary among the eastern nations. In those sultry
 climes, nothing could be more welcome to the traveller than a brook
 streaming near his paths. To quench his thirst, and lave his feet
 in the cooling current, was one of the greatest refreshments imagin-
 able, and re-animated him to pursue his journey. For which rea-
 son, among others, brooks are a very favourite image with the in-
 spired penmen, used to denote a situation *fertile and delightful*, or
 a state of *pleasure and satisfaction* ; but never that I can recollect,
 to picture out the contrary condition of tribulation and distress.

The *water-floods*, indeed, in the sacred writings, often represent
 some imminent danger, or grievous affliction. But then they are
 not—*נהלים כרוך*—streams so *calm*, that they keep within their
 banks, and glide quietly by the traveller’s footsteps ; so *clear*, that
 they are fit for the wayfaring man’s use, and invite his lips to a
 draught ; both which notions are plainly implied in the text. They
 are rather—*משברי*—*boisterous billows* ; bursting over a ship, or dash-
 ing themselves with dreadful impetuosity upon the shore, or—*שבלת*
 —*sweeping inundations* ; which bear down all before them, and
 drown the neighbouring country.——Besides, in these instances of
 horror, we never find the word—*ישתה*—*he shall drink* ; which con-
 veys a pleasing idea, (unless when it relates to a cup filled with bit-
 ter, intoxicating, or impoisoned liquors, a case quite different from
 that under consideration) ; but either—*בנה*—which imports *terror*
 and *astonishment*, or else—*שטף*—and—*עבר*—which signify to *rush*
upon, to *overwhelm*, and even to *bury* under the waves.

Upon the whole, may not the passage more properly allude to the
influences of the Holy Ghost ? which were communicated, in unmea-
 surable degrees, to our great High-Priest ; and were, in fact, the cause
 of his surmounting all difficulties.—These are frequently represent-
 ed by *waters* ; “ Whoso believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow
 “ rivers of living waters.” The enjoyment of them is described by
drinking ; He that *drinketh* of the water that I shall give him, shall
 “ never thirst”—Then the sense may run in this well connected and
 perspicuous manner. It is asked, how shall the Redeemer be able to
 execute the various and important offices foretold in the preceding
 parts of the psalm ? The prophet replies, “ He shall drink of the
 “ brook in the way.” He shall not be left barely to his human nature,
 which must unavoidably sink under the tremendous work of recover-
 ing the lost world ; but through the whole course of his incarnate
 state, through the whole administration of his mediatorial kingdom,
 shall be supported with omnipotent succours. He shall drink at the
 brook of almighty power, and travel on in the greatness of an un-
 created

By the preaching of thy word, shall such an innumerable race of regenerate children be born unto thee; and prove an ornament and a blessing to all ages. Millions, millions of willing converts, from every nation under heaven, shall croud into thy family, and replenish thy church; till they become like the stars of the sky, or the sands of the sea for multitude; or even as *numberless* as these fine *spangles*, which now cover the face of nature.—

Behold then, ye obstinately wicked, though you “are not gathered, yet will the Saviour be glorious.” His design shall not miscarry, nor his labour prove abortive, though you render it of none effect with regard to yourselves. Think not that IMMANUEL will want believers, or heaven inhabitants, because you continue incorrigible. No; the Lamb that was slain, will “see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied;” in a never-failing series of faithful people below, and an immense choir of glorified saints above; who shall form his retinue, and surround his throne, in shining and triumphant armies, such as no man can number.

Here I was reminded of the various expedients which providence, unsearchably wise, uses to *fructify* both the material and intellectual world.—

Sometimes, you shall have *impetuous* and heavy *showers*, bursting from the angry clouds. They lash the plains, and make the rivers foam. A storm brings them, and a deluge follows them.—At other times these *gentle dews* are formed, in the serene evening air. They steal down by slow degrees, and with insensible stillness. So subtle, that they deceive the nicest eye: so silent that they escape the most delicate ear: and, when fallen, so very light,

created strength.—“Therefore shall he lift up the head.” By this means shall he be equal to the prodigious task, and superior to all opposition. By this means shall he be thoroughly successful, in whatever he undertakes; and greatly triumphant over all his enemies.

light, that they neither bruise the tenderest, nor oppress the weakest flower.—Very *different* operations! yet each concurs in the same beneficial end, and both impart fertility to the lap of nature.

So, some persons have I known, reclaimed from the unfruitful works of darkness, by *violent* and severe means. The Almighty addressed their stubborn hearts, as he addressed the *Israelites* at *Sinai*, with lightning in his eyes and thunder in his voice. The conscience, smit with a sense of guilt, and apprehensive of eternal vengeance, trembled through all her powers; just as that strong mountain tottered to its centre. Pangs of remorse, and agonies of fear, preceded their new birth! They were reduced to the last extremities, almost overwhelmed with despair, before they found rest in JESUS CHRIST. Others have been recovered from a vain conversation, by methods more *mild* and attractive. The Father of Spirits applied himself to their teachable minds, in “a still and small voice.” His grace came down, as the rain into a fleece of wool; or as these softening drops, which now water the earth. The kingdom of GOD took place in their souls, without noise or observation. They passed from death unto life, from a carnal to a regenerate state, by almost imperceptible advances. The transition resembled the growth of corn; was very visible, when effected; though scarce sensible, while accomplishing—O thou author and finisher of our faith, recal us from our wanderings, and re-unite us to thyself: whether thou *alarm* us with thy terrors, or *allure* us with thy smiles: whether thou drive us with the scourge of conviction, or draw us with the cords of love: let us in any wise, return to thee. For thou art our supreme good; thou art our sole happiness.

Before I proceed farther, let me ascend the *terrace*, and take one survey of the neighbouring *country*.—What a prospect rushes upon my sight!

How

How vast ; how various ; how “ full and plenteous
 “ with all manner of store !” Nature’s whole
 wealth !—What a rich and inexhaustible magazine
 is here, furnishing subsistence for every creature !
 Methinks, I read, in these spacious volumes, a
 most lively comment, upon that noble celebration
 of the divine beneficence ; “ He openeth his hand,
 “ and filleth all things living with plenteousness.”

“ These are thy glorious works, Parent of good,
 “ Almighty ! thine this universal frame,
 “ Thus wondrous fair ! thyself how wondrous
 “ then !”

MILT.

The *fields* are covered deep, and stand thick,
 with corn. They expand the milky *grain* to the
 sun ; while the gales, now inclining, now raising
 each flexile stem, open all their ranks to the agency
 of his beams : which will soon impart a firm con-
 sistence to the grain, and a glossy golden hue to the
 ear, that they may be qualified, to fill the barns of
 the husbandman with plenty, and his heart with
 gladness.

Yonder lie the *meadows*, smoothed into a perfect
 level ; decorated with an embroidery of the gayest
 flowers, and loaded with spontaneous crops* of
herbage : which converted into hay, will prove a
 most commodious provision for the barrenness of
 winter ; will supply with fodder our serviceable
 animals, when all the verdure of the plain is killed
 by frosts, or buried in snows.—A winding *stream*,
 glides along the flowery margin ; and receives the
 image of the bending skies, and waters the roots
 of many a branching willow. It is stocked, no
 doubt, with variety of *fish* : which afford a solitary
 diversion

* ——— *Injussa virescent*
Gramina———

Virg.

There grass spontaneous grows.

diversion to the angler, and nourish for his table a delicious treat. Nor is it the only merit of this liquid element, to maintain the finny nations; it also carries *cleanliness*, and dispenses *fruitfulness*, wherever it rolls the crystal current.

The *pastures*, with their verdant mounds, chequer the prospect; and prepare a standing repast for our cattle. There, "our oxen are made strong to labour; and our sheep bring forth thousands and ten thousands." There, the horse acquires vigour, for the dispatch of our business; and speed, to expedite our journeys. From thence the kine bring home their udders, distended with one of the richest, and healthiest liquors in the world.

On several spots, a *grove* of trees, like some grand colonnade, erects its towering head. Every one projects a friendly shade, for the beasts; and creates a hospitable lodging, for the birds. Every one stands ready, to furnish *timber* for a palace; *masts* for a navy; or, with a more condescending courtesy, *fuel* for our hearths——One of them seems skirted with a wild uncultivated *beath*; which, like well disposed shades in painting, throws an additional lustre on the more ornamented parts of the landscape. Nor is its usefulness, like that of a foil, relative only, but real. There, several valuable creatures are produced, and accommodated; without any expense, or care of ours. There, likewise spring abundance of those *herbs*, which assuage the smart of our wounds, and allay the fiery tumults of the fever; which impart floridity to our circulating fluids; add a more vigorous tone to our active solids; and, thereby, repair the decays of our enfeebled constitutions.

Nearer the houses, we perceive an ample spread of branches; not so stately as the oaks, but more amiable for their annual services. A little while ago,

ago, I beheld them; and all was one beautiful, boundless waste of *blossoms*. The eye marvelled, at the lovely sight; and the heart rejoiced, in the prospect of autumnal plenty. But now, the blooming maid is resigned, for the useful matron. The flower is fallen, and the *fruit* swells out on every twig.—Breathe soft, ye winds! O, spare the tender fruitage, ye surly blasts! let the *pear-tree* suckle her juicy progeny, till they drop into our hands, and dissolve in our mouths. Let the *plum* hang unmolested upon her boughs; till she fatten her delicious flesh, and cloud her polished skin with blue. And as for the *apples*, that staple commodity of our *orchards*, let no injurious shocks precipitate them immaturity to the ground; till revolving suns have tinged them with a ruddy complexion, and concocted them into an exquisite flavour. Then, what copious hoards, of what burnished rinds, and what delightful relishes, will replenish the store room! Some, to present us with an early entertainment, and refresh our palates amidst the sultry heats. Some, to borrow ripeness from the falling snows, and carry autumn into the depths of winter.—Some, to adorn the salver, make a part of the desert, and give an agreeable close to our feasts.* Others, to fill our vats with a foaming flood; which, mellowed by age, may sparkle in the glass, with a liveliness and delicacy, little inferior to the blood of the grape.

I observe several small *inclosures*, which seem to be apprehensive of some hostile visit from the north; and, therefore, are defended, on that quarter, by a thick wood, or a lofty wall. At the same time, they cultivate an uninterrupted correspondence with the south; and throw open their whole dimensions,
to

* ——— *Ab ovo*
Usque ad mala ———

Hor.

to its friendly warmth. One, in particular, lies within the reach of a distinguishing view: and proves to be a *kitchen garden*. It looks, methinks, like a plain and frugal republic. Whatever may resemble the pomp of courts, or the ensigns of royalty, is banished from this humble community. None of the productions of the olitory affect finery; but all are habited with the very perfection of decency. Here, those celebrated qualities are eminently united, the utmost simplicity with the exactest neatness.*—A skilful hand has parcelled out the whole ground, into narrow beds, and intervening alleys. The same discreet management has assigned to each verdant family a peculiar and distinct abode. So that there is no confusion, amidst the greatest multiplicity; because every individual is associated with propriety, and all the tribes are ranged with perfect regularity.—If it be pleasing to behold their orderly situation, and their modest beauties; how much more delightful, to consider the advantages they yield! what a fund of choice *accommodations* is here! what a source of wholesome dainties! and all for the enjoyment of man. Why does the *parsley*, with her frizzled locks, shag the border; or why the *celery*, with her whitening arms perforate the mould; but to render his soups savoury? The *asparagus* shoots its tapering stems, to offer him the first-fruits of the season; and the *artichoke* spreads its turgid top, to give him a treat of vegetable marrow. The tendrils of the *cucumber* creep into the sun; † and, though basking in its

* *Simplex munditiis.*

Hor.

—Drest with careless art.

† Virgil, with great consciousness, and equal propriety, describes the *cucumber*.

—*Tortusque per herbam*

* *Cresceret in ventrem cucumis* —

Georg. iv.

And cucumbers along the surface creep.

Milton

its hottest rays, they secrete for their master, and barrel up for his use, the most cooling juices of the soil. The *beans* stand firm, like files of embattled troops; the *peas* rest upon their props, like so many companies of idvalids; while both replenish their pods with the fatness of the earth, on purpose to pour it on their owner's table.—Not one species, among all this variety of herbs, is a cumberer of the ground. Not a single plant, but is good for food, or some way salutary. With so beneficent an œconomy, are the several periods of their administration settled, that no portion of the year is left destitute of nourishing esculents. What is still more obliging, every portion of the year affords *such* esculents, as are best suited to the temperature of the air, and the state of our bodies.—Why then should the *possessor* of so valuable a spot, envy the condition of kings? since he may daily walk amidst rows of peaceable and obsequious, though mute subjects. Every one of which tenders him some agreeable present, and pays him a willing tribute: such as is most happily adapted, both to supply his wants, and to regale his taste; to furnish him, at once with plenty and with pleasure.

At

Milton has (if we admit Dr. Bentley's alteration, which is, I think in *this* place, unquestionably just) almost translated the Latin poet,

—————Forth crept
The *swelling* gourd—————

Par. Lost. b. vii. l. 323.

* Hic rarum tamen in dumis olus, albaque circum
Lilia, verbenique premens, cœsumque papaver,
Regum æquabat opes animis: seraque revertens
Nocte domum, dapibus mensas onerabat inemptis.

Virg. Georg. iv.

Yet he thin sallads 'mid the bushy ground,
And vervain, planted, and white lilies round;
And late at eve returning home to rest,
His frugal board with unbought dainties blest,
Nor wish'd to be the richest monarch's guest.

At a distance, one descries the mighty *hills*. They heave their huge ridges among the clouds ; and look like the barriers of kingdoms, or the boundaries of nature. Bare and deformed as their surface may appear, their bowels are fraught with inward treasures ! treasures, lodged fast in the *quarries*, or sunk deep in the *mines*. From thence industry may draw her implements to plough the soil, to reap the grain, and procure every necessary convenience. From thence art may fetch her materials, or rear the dome, to swell the organ, and form the noblest ornaments of politer life.

On another side, the *great deep* terminates the view. “ There go the ships ; there is that *Leviathan* :” and there, in that world of waters, an inconceivable number of animals have their habitation.—This is the capacious *cistern* of the *universe* ; which admits, as into a receptacle, and distributes, as from a reservoir, whatever waters the whole globe. There is not a fountain that gushes in the unfrequented desert, nor a rivulet that flows in the remotest continent, nor a cloud that swims in the highest regions of the firmament, but is fed by this all-replenishing source.—The ocean is the grand *vehicle* of *trade*, and the uniter of distant nations. To us it is peculiarly kind, not only as it wafts into our ports the harvest of every climate, and renders our island the centre of traffic ; but also as it secures us from foreign invasions, by a sort of impregnable entrenchment.*

Methinks,

* “ Whose rampart was the sea.” Nahum iii. 8.

I hope this little excursion into the country will not be looked upon as a *departure* from my subject. Because a rural view, though no essential part of a garden, is yet a desirable appendage, and necessary to *complete* its beauty.—As usefulness is the most valuable property which can attend any production, *this* is the circumstance chiefly touched upon in the survey of the landscape. Though every piece of this extensive and diversified scene is cast in the most elegant mould ; yet nothing is calculated merely for shew and parade.

Methinks, the view of this profuse munificence inspires a *secret delight*, and kindles a *disinterested good-will*.—While the “little hills clap their hands,” and the luxuriant “valleys laugh and sing:” who can forbear catching the general joy? who is not touched with lively sensations of pleasure?—while the everlasting Father is scattering blessings through his whole family, and crowning the year with his goodness; who does not feel his breast overflowing with a diffusive benevolence?—My heart, I must confess, beats high with satisfaction, and breathes out *congratulatory wishes* upon all the tenants of these rural abodes: “Peace be within your walls, “as well as plenteousness around your dwellings.” Live, ye highly favoured, live sensible of your benefits, and thankful to your benefactor. Look round upon these prodigiously large incomes of the fruitful soil, and call them (for you have free leave) all your own.—Only let me remind you of one very important truth. Let me suggest, and may you never forget, that you are *obliged* to CHRIST JESUS for every one of these accommodations, which spring from the teeming earth, and the smiling skies.

I. CHRIST *made* them,* when they were not.—He fetched them up from utter darkness, and gave them

rade. You see nothing formed in the taste of the ostentatious obelisk or insignificant pomp of the pyramid. No such idle expences were admitted into that consummate plan which regulated the structure of the universe. All the decorations of nature are no less *advantageous* than *ornamental*; such as speak the MAKER infinitely beneficent, as well as incomparably magnificent.

* When I ascribe the work of creation to the SON, I would by no means be supposed to withhold the same honour from the eternal FATHER and ever blessed SPIRIT. The acts of those inconceivably glorious persons are, like their essence, undivided and one. But I chuse to state the point in this manner,* because this is the manifest doctrine of the New Testament; is the express belief of our church; and a most noble peculiarity of the gospel revelation. —I chuse it also, because I would take every opportunity of inculcating

them both their being and their beauty. He created the materials of which they are composed, and moulded them into this endless multiplicity of amiable forms, and useful substances. He arrayed the heavens, with a vesture of the mildest blue; and clothed the earth, in a livery of the gayest green. His pencil streaked, and his breath perfumed, whatever is beautiful or fragrant in the universe. His strength set fast the mountains; his goodness garnished the vales; and the same *touch* which healed the *leper*, wrought the whole visible *system* into this complete perfection.

2. CHRIST recovered them, when they were forfeited.—By Adam's sin, we lost our right to the comforts of life, and fruits of the ground. His disobedience was the most impious and horrid *treason* against the King of kings: Consequently, his whole patrimony became *confiscated*; as well the portion of temporal good things settled upon the human race during their minority, as that everlasting heritage reserved for their enjoyment, when they should come to full age. But the "seed of the woman," instantly interposing, took off the attainer, and retained the alienated inheritance. The first *Adam* being disinherited, the second *Adam* was "appointed heir of all things," visible as well

as

culcating and celebrating the *divinity* of the REDEEMER. A truth which imparts an unutterable dignity to Christianity: a truth which lays an immoveable foundation for all the comfortable hopes of a Christian: a truth which will render the mystery of our redemption the wonder and delight of eternity: and with this truth, every one will observe, my assertion is inseparably connected.

If any one questions whether this be the doctrine of our church, let the *creed*, which we repeat in our most solemn devotions, determine his doubt: "I believe," says that form of sound words, "in one LORD, JESUS CHRIST, very GOD of very GOD, by whom all things were made."—If it be farther inquired, from whence the Nicene fathers derived this article of their faith? I answer, From the writings of the beloved disciple, who lay on the Saviour's bosom; and of that great apostle, who had been caught up into the third heaven. John i. 3. Coloss. i. 16.

as invisible. * And we hold our possession of the former ; we expect an instatement in the latter ; purely by virtue of our alliance to him, and our union with him.

3. CHRIST *upholds* them, which would otherwise tumble into ruin.—“ By him,” says the oracle of inspiration, “ all things consist.” † His finger rolls the seasons round, and presides over all the celestial revolutions. His finger winds up the wheels, and impels every spring, of vegetative nature. In a word, the whole weight of the creation rests upon his mighty arm, and receives the whole harmony of its motion from his unerring eye.—This habitable globe, with all its rich appendages, and fine machinery, could no more continue than they could create themselves. *Start* they would into instant *confusion*, or *drop* into their primitive nothing, did not his power support, and his wisdom regulate them

* Heb. i. 2.—In this sense, at least, CHRIST is the *Saviour of all men*. The former and latter rain ; the precious fruits of the earth ; food to eat, and raiment to put on ;—all these he purchased even for his irreclaimable enemies. *They* eat of his bread, who lift up their heel against him.

We learn from hence, in what a peculiar and endearing light the *Christian* is to contemplate the things that are seen. *Heathens* might discover an eternal power, and infinite wisdom, in the structure of the universe ; *Heathens* might acknowledge a most stupendous liberality in the unreserved grant of the whole fabric, with all its furniture, to the service of man. But the *Christian* should ever keep in mind his forfeiture of them, and the price paid to redeem them. He should receive the gifts of indulgent providence, as the *Israelites* received their law, from the hand of a mediator. Or rather, to him they should come, not only issuing from the stores of an unbounded bounty, but swimming (as it were) in that crimson tide which streamed from IMMANUEL's veins.

† Col. i. 17. I beg leave to subjoin St. Chrysostom's pertinent and beautiful note upon the passage ; by which it will appear, that the sentiment of these sections is not merely a private opinion, but the avowed belief of the primitive church. Τότε, says the eloquent father, εἰς αὐτὸν κρεμαται ἡ πάντων ὑποστάσις· ὃ μόνον αὐτῷ αὐτὰ ἐκ τῆ μη οὐκ εἰς τὸ εἶναι παρηλθεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὸς αὐτὰ σὺγκρατει νυν· ὥς ἂν ἀποσπασθῇ τῆς αὐτῆς προνοίας, ἀπολωλε καὶ διεφθαρταί.

them, every moment. In conformity to his will, they subsist stedfast and invariable in their orders, and wait only for his sovereign nod, to “fall away like water, that runneth apace.”

4. Christ *actuates* them,* which would otherwise be lifeless and insignificant.—Pensioners they are, constant pensioners, on his bounty; and borrow their *all* from his fulness. “He only has life;” and whatever operates, operates by an emanation from his all-sufficiency. Does the grape refresh you, with its enlivening juices? It is by a warrant received, and virtue derived, from the Redeemer. Does bread strengthen your heart, and prove the staff of your life? Remember, that it is by the Saviour’s appointment, and through the efficacy of his operation. You are charmed with *his* melody, when the “time of the singing of birds is come, “and the voice of the turtle is heard in your land.” You taste *his* goodness in the luscious fig, the melting peach, and the musky flavour of the apricot. You smell *his* sweetness in the opening honyfuckle, and every odoriferous shrub.

Could these creatures speak for themselves, they would, doubtless, disclaim all sufficiency of their own, and ascribe the whole honour to their Maker. —“We are servants,” would they say, “of HIM who died for you. *Cisterns* only, dry cisterns in ourselves, we *transmit* to mortals no more than the uncreated fountain transfuses into us. Think not, that, from any ability of our own, we furnish you with assistance, or administer to your comfort. It is the divine energy, the divine
“energy

* John v. 17. “My father worketh hitherto, and I work;” or I exert that unremitting and unwearied energy, which is the life of the creation——Thus the words are paraphrased by a masterly expositor, who has illustrated the life of our blessed LORD, in the most elegant taste of criticism, with the most amiable spirit of devotion; and without any mixture of the malignant spleen, or low singularities, of a party. See the *Family-Expositor*, vol. i. sect. 47.

“ energy alone, that works in us, and does you
 “ good.—We *serve* you, O ye sons of men, that
 “ you may *love* him, who placed us in these sta-
 “ tions. O! love the LORD, therefore, all ye who
 “ are supported by our ministry; or else we shall
 “ groan,* with indignation and regret, at your
 “ abuse of our services.—Use us, and welcome;
 “ for we are yours, if ye are CHRIST’S. Crop
 “ our choicest beauties; rifle all our treasures;
 “ accommodate yourselves with our most valuable
 “ qualities; only let us be incentives to your *grat-
 “ titude*, and motives to your *obedience*.”

Having surveyed the spacious sky; and sent a glance round the inferior creation; it is time to descend from this eminence, and confine my attention to the *beautiful spot* below.—Here, Nature, always pleasing, every where lovely, appears with peculiar attractions. Yonder, she seems dressed in her dishabille; grand, but irregular. Here, she calls in her handmaid art, and shines in all the delicate ornaments which the nicest cultivation is able to convey. *Those* are her common apartments, where she lodges her ordinary guests; *this* is her cabinet of curiosities, where she entertains her intimate acquaintance.—My eye shall often expatiate over those scenes of universal fertility; my feet shall sometimes brush through the thicket, or traverse the lawn, or stroll along the forest glade: but to this delightful retreat, shall be my chief resort, Thither will I *make excursions*; but here will I *dwell*.

If, from my low procedure, I may form an allusion to the most exalted practices; I would observe, upon this occasion, that the celebrated *Erasmus*, and our judicious *Locke*, having trode the circle of the sciences, and ranged through the whole extent
 of

* Rom. viii, 22.

of *human* literature, at length betook themselves solely to the *Bible*. Leaving the sages of antiquity, they sat incessantly at the feet of JESUS. Wisely they withdrew from that immense multiplicity of learning: from those endless tracts of amusing erudition; where noxious weeds are mixed with wholesome herbs: where is generally a much larger growth of prickly shrubs, than of fruitful boughs. They spent their most mature hours, in these hallowed gardens which GOD's own wisdom planted; which GOD's own Spirit watereth; and in which GOD's own Son is continually walking; where he meeteth those that seek him, and revealeth to them the glories of his person, and the riches of his goodness.

Thus would I finish the remainder of my days! Having just *tasted* (what they call) the politer studies, I would now devote my whole *application* to the lively oracles. From other pursuits, I might glean, perhaps, a few scattered fragments of low, of lean, of unsatisfactory instruction. From this, I trust to reap a harvest of the sublimest truths; the noblest improvements; and the purest joys.*—Waft me then, O! waft my mind to Sion's consecrated bowers. Let my thoughts perpetually rove, through the awfully-pleasing walks of inspiration. Here grow those heaven-born plants, the trees of *life* and *knowledge*: whose ambrosial fruits we now may “take and eat, and live for ever.” Here flow those precious streams of *grace* and *righteousness*; whose living waters “whosoever drinks shall thirst no more.” And what can the fables of Grecian song, or the finest pages of Roman eloquence—what can they exhibit in any degree comparable to these matchless prerogatives of revelation?—Therefore, though I should not dislike to pay a *visit* now and then to my Heathen masters, I would *live* with

* *Quicquid docetur, veritas; quicquid precipitur, bonitas; quicquid promittitur, felicitas.*

with the prophets and apostles. With those I would carry on some occasional correspondence; but these should be my bosom friends, my inseparable companions, “my delight, and my counsellors.”

What *sweets* are these, which so agreeably salute my nostrils? They are the breath of the flowers; the incense of the garden.—How liberally does the jessamine dispense her odoriferous riches! How deliciously has the woodbine embalmed this morning walk! The air is all perfume.—And is not this another most engaging argument, to forsake the bed of *sloth*? Who would lie dissolved in senseless slumbers, while so many breathing sweets invite him to a feast of fragrancy? Especially considering that the advancing day will exhale the volatile dainties. A *fugitive treat* they are, prepared only for the wakeful and industrious. Whereas, when the sluggard lifts his heavy eyes, the flowers will droop; their fine scents will be dissipated; and instead of this refreshing humidity, the air will become a kind of liquid fire.

With this very *motive*, heightened by a representation of the most charming pieces of morning scenery, the parent of mankind awakes his lovely comfort. There is such a delicacy in the choice, and so much life in the description, of these rural images, that I cannot excuse myself, without repeating the whole passage.—Whisper it, some friendly *genius*, in the ear of every one who is now sunk in sleep, and lost to all these refined gratifications!

“Awake: the morning shines, and the fresh field
 “Calls you: ye lose the prime, to mark how spring
 “The tended plants, how blows the citron grove;
 “What drops the myrrh, and what the balmy reed;
 “How Nature paints her colours; how the bee
 “Sits on the bloom, extracting liquid sweets.”*

How

• Milt. Par. Lost. b. v. l. 20.

How delightful is this fragrance! It is distributed in the nicest *proportion*; neither so strong as to oppress the organs, nor so faint as to elude them. We are soon cloyed at a sumptuous banquet; but this pleasure never loses its *poignancy*, never palls the appetite.—Here, luxury itself is innocent; or rather, in this case, indulgence is incapable of excess. This balmy entertainment not only regales the *sense*, but cheers the very *soul*;* and, instead of clogging, elates its powers.—It puts me in mind of that ever-memorable sacrifice which was once made in behalf of offending mortals. I mean the *sacrifice of the blessed* JESUS; when he offered up himself to GOD, “for a sweet-smelling favour.” Such the Holy Spirit styles that wonderful oblation: as if no image in the whole sensible creation, was so proper to give us an idea of the *ineffable satisfaction*, which the Father of mercies conceived from that unparalleled atonement, as the *pleasing sensations* which such rich perfumes are capable of raising. “Thousands of
“rams, and ten thousands of rivers of oil,” from an apostate world; the most submissive acknowledgments, added to the most costly offerings, from men of defiled hands, and unclean lips; what could they have effected? A prophet represents, the
“High and Lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity,” turning himself away from such filthy rags; turning himself away with a disdainful abhorrence,† as from the noisome steams of a dunghill.—But in CHRIST’S immaculate holiness; in CHRIST’S consummate obedience; in CHRIST’S most precious blood-shedding; with what unimaginable complacency does justice rest satisfied, and vengeance acquiesce!—All thy *works*, O thou surety for ruined sinners! all thy *sufferings*, O thou slaughtered Lamb of GOD! as well as all thy *garments*, O thou Bridegroom

* “Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart.” Prov. xxviii. 9.

† AMOS v. 21, 22.

groom of thy church! “smell of myrrh, and aloes, “and cassia!”* They are infinitely more grateful to the eternal Godhead than the choicest exhalations of the garden, than all the odours of the spicy east, can be to the human nostrils.

As the altar of old sanctified the gift; so this is the great propitiation, which recommends the obnoxious persons, and unprofitable services, of the believing world. In *this*, may my soul be interested; by *this*, may it be reconciled to the Father!—There is such a leprous depravity cleaving to my nature, as pollutes whatever I perform. My most profound adorations, and sincerest acts of religion, must not presume to *challenge* a reward, but humbly *implore* forgiveness.† Renouncing, therefore, myself, in every instance of duty; disclaiming all shadow of confidence in any deeds of my own; may I now, and evermore, “be accepted through “the Beloved!”‡

What

* Psal. xlv. 9:

† A writer of distinguished superiority, *thus* addresses the great observer of actions, and searcher of hearts; and vindicates *my* sentiments, while he so justly and beautifully utters his own.

Look down, great GOD, with pity's softest eye,
On a poor breathing particle of dust.
His crimes forgive; forgive his virtues too,
Those *smaller faults*, *half converts* to the right.

Night-Thoughts, N. IX.

‡ See page 44, and 45, in the *second* edition, of a most candid and *evangelical* little treatise, called CHRISTIANITY the great ORNAMENT of Human Life.—“If Christians happily avoid “the *dangerous* extreme, and too often *fatal* rock, of a dead fruitless faith on the one hand, he (*i. e.* Satan) will endeavour, by “all kind of plausible insinuations, to split them on the opposite, “*viz.* spiritual pride, ostentation, and *dependence on their works*, “as if THESE were the *meritorious* or *procuring* cause of all true peace, hope, consolation, and divine acceptance.—Now, this “*self-dependence* may be ranked among the *most dangerous* of the “*infernal* politics, because the fatal poison lies *deep*, and too often “*undiscerned*.”

What colours, what charming colours, are here! these, so nobly bold; and those so delicately languid. What a glow is enkindled in some! what a gloss shines upon others! In one, methinks, I see the ruby with her bleeding radiance; in another the sapphire, with her sky-tinctured blue; in all, such an exquisite richness of dyes, as no other set of paintings in the universe can boast.*—With what a masterly *skill* is every one of the varying tints *disposed*! Here, they seem to be thrown on with an easy dash of security and freedom; there, they are adjusted by the nicest touches of art and accuracy. Those which form the ground, are always so judiciously chosen, as to heighten the lustre of the superadded figures, while the verdure of the impalement, or the shadings of the foliage, impart new liveliness to the whole. Indeed, whether they are blended, or arranged; softened, or contrasted; they are manifestly under the conduct of a taste, that never mistakes; a felicity, that never falls short of the very perfection of elegance.—Fine, inimitably fine, is the *texture* of the web on which these shining treasures are displayed. What are the labours of the Persian looms, or the boasted commodities of Brussels, compared with these curious manufactures of nature? Compared with these, the most admired chintzes lose their reputation; even superfine cambrics appear coarse as canvas in their presence.

What a cheering argument does our Saviour derive from hence, to strengthen our *affiance* in GOD! He directs us to learn a lesson of heaven depending

* ————— Who can paint
Like *Nature*? Can Imagination boast,
Amid his gay creation, hues like these?
And can he mix them with that matchless skill,
And lay them on so delicately fine,
And lose them in each other, as appears
In ev'ry bud that blows? —————

Thomf. Spring!

ing faith, from every bird, that wings the air; and from every flower, that blossoms in the field. If Providence, with unremitted care, supports those inferior creatures; and arrays these insensible beings, with so much splendor; surely, he will in no wise withhold, from his elect children, "bread to eat, and raiment to put on."——Ye faithful followers of the lamb, dismiss every low *anxiety*, relating to the needful *sustenance* of life. He that feeds the ravens, from an inexhaustible magazine; he that paints the plants, with such surpassing elegance; in short, he that provides so liberally, both for the animal and vegetable parts of his creation; will not, cannot, neglect his own people.——

"Fear not, little flock," ye peculiar objects of almighty love! "It is your Father's good pleasure, to give you a kingdom."* And, if he freely gives you an everlasting kingdom hereafter; is it possible to suppose, that he will deny you any necessary conveniencies here?

One cannot forbear reflecting, in this place, on the too prevailing humour, of being fond and ostentatious of *dresses*.† What an abject and mistaken ambition

* Luke xii. 32.

† Mr. Addison has a fine remark on a female warrior celebrated by Virgil. He observes, that with all her great qualities this *little faible* mingled itself. Because, as the poet relates, an intemperate fondness for a rich and splendid suit of armour, betrayed her into ruin. In this circumstance, our critic discovers a *moral* concealed; this he admires, as a neat, though oblique, *saire*, on that trifling passion. *Spect.* Vol. i. No. 15.

I would refer it to the judicious reader, whether there is not a beauty of the same kind, but touched with a *more* masterly hand, in the song of Deborah.——Speaking of Sisera's mother, the sacred eucharistic ode represents her as anticipating, in her fond fancy, the victory of her son, and indulging the following soliloquy:——"Have they not sped? Have they not divided the prey? To Sisera a prey of divers colours, a prey of divers colours of needle-work, of divers colours of needle-work on both sides, meet for the necks of them that take the spoil."—She takes no notice of the signal service which her hero would do to his country, by quelling

ambition is this! how unworthy the dignity of *immortal*, and the wisdom of *rational* beings! especially, since these little productions of the earth, have indisputably the pre-eminence, in such outward embellishments.—Go, clothe thyself with purple, and fine linen; trick thyself up with all thy gay attire, which the shuttle or the needle can furnish. Yet, know, to the mortification of thy vanity, that the *native* elegance of a common daisy,* eclipses all this *elaborate finery*.

Nay, wert thou decked like some illustrious princess, on her coronation day, in all the splendor of royal apparel; couldst thou equal even *Solomon*, in the height of his magnificence and glory; yet would the meanest among the *flowery populace* outshine thee. Every discerning eye would give the preference

ling so dangerous an insurrection. She never reflects on the *present* acclamations, the future advancement, and the *eternal* renown, which are the tribute usually paid to a conqueror's merit. She can conceive, it seems, nothing greater, than to be clad in an embroidered vesture; and to trail along the ground a robe of the richest dyes. This is, in her imagination, the most lordly spoil he can win, the most stately trophy he can erect.—It is observable, how she dwells upon the trivial circumstance, reiterating it again and again. It has so charmed her ignoble heart, so entirely engrossed her little views, that she can think of nothing else, *speak* of nothing else, and can hardly ever *desist* from the darling topic.—Is not this a keen, though delicately couched censure, on that poor, contemptible, groveling taste, which is enamoured with filken finery and makes the *attributes* of a butterfly the *idol* of its affections?

How conspicuous is the elevated and magnificent spirit of that venerable *mother* in *Israel*, when viewed in comparison with the low, the despicable turn of this *Canaanitish lady*! —Such strong and beautiful *contrasts* are, I think, some of the most striking excellencies of poetic painting? and in no book are they more frequently used, or expressed with greater life, than in the sacred volumes of inspiration.

* Peaceful and lowly in her native soil,
They neither know to spin, nor care to toil;
Yet with confess'd magnificence, deride
Our mean attire, and impotence of pride.

Prior

preference to these beauties of the ground.*——
 Scorn then to borrow thy recommendations, from
 a neat disposition of threads, and a curious arrange-
 ment of colours. Assume a becoming greatness of
 temper. Let thy endowments be of the immortal
 kind. Study to be all *gracious within*. Be clothed
 with humility. Wear the ornament of a meek and
 quiet spirit. † To say all in a word; “put on the
 “**LORD JESUS CHRIST.**” ‡ Let his *blood* be
 sprinkled upon thy conscience, and it shall be whiter
 than the virgin snows. Let his *righteousness*, like a
 spotless robe, adorn thy inner-man; and thou shalt
 be amiable, even in the most distinguishing eye of
 GOD. Let his blessed *Spirit* dwell in thy heart;
 and, under his sanctifying operations, thou shalt be
 made partaker of a divine nature.

These are real excellencies; truly noble accom-
 plishments these. In this manner be arrayed, be
 beautified; and thou wilt not find a rival, in the
 feathers of a peacock, or the foliation of a tulip.
 These will exalt thee, far above the *low pretensions*
 of lace and embroidery. These will prepare thee
 to stand in the beatific presence, and to take thy seat
 among the angels of light.

What an enchanting situation is this! One can
 scarce be melancholy within the atmosphere of
 flowers. Such lively hues, and delicious odours,
 not only address themselves agreeably to the senses,
 but touch, with a surprising delicacy, the sweetest
 movements of the mind.

“To

* Mr. Cowley, with his usual brilliancy of imagination, styles
 them, *stars of earth*.

† How beautifully does the prophet describe the *furniture* of a re-
 newed and heavenly *mind*, under the similitude of a rich and com-
 plete *suit of apparel*! “I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my
 “soul shall be joyful in my GOD; for he hath clothed me with
 “the garments of salvation; he hath covered me with the robe of
 “righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments,
 “and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.” Isa. lxi. 10.

‡ Rom. xiii. 14.

———"To the heart inspiring
 "Vernal delight and joy."*

MILT. b. IV.

How often have I felt them dissipate the *gloom* of thought, and transfuse a sudden gaiety through the dejected spirit! I cannot wonder that kings descend from their *thrones*, to walk amidst blooming ivory and gold; or retire from the most sumptuous feast, to be recreated with the more refined sweets of the garden. I cannot wonder, that queens forego, for a while, the compliments of a nation, to receive the tribute of the parterre; or withdraw from all the glitter of a *court*, to be attended with the more splendid *equipage* of a bed of flowers.—But if this be so pleasing; what transporting pleasure must arise from the fruition of uncreated excellency! O! what unknown delight, to enter into thy *immediate presence*, most blessed LORD GOD! to see thee, thou King of Heaven, and LORD of glory,† no longer "through a glass
 "darkly,

* "I would have my reader endeavour to *moralize* this natural pleasure of the soul, and to improve this *vernal delight*, as Milton calls it, into a *Christian virtue*. When we find ourselves inspired with this pleasing instinct, this secret satisfaction and complacency, arising from the beauties of the creation, let us consider to *whom* we stand indebted for all these entertainments of sense; and *who* is it that thus opens his hand, and fills the world with good.——Such an habitual disposition of mind *consecrates* every field and wood; turns an *ordinary walk* into a morning or evening sacrifice; and will improve those transient gleams which naturally brighten up and refresh the soul on such occasions, into an inviolable and perpetual state of bliss and happiness."

Spect. Vol. v. No. 324.

† Isaiah represents the felicity of the righteous, in the everlasting world, by this elegant and amiable image; "Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty."—Milton touches the same subject with wonderful elevation and majesty of thought:

———"They walk with GOD,
 "High in salvation, and the climes of bliss."

Words which like the fiery car, almost transport our affections to those glorious abodes. Isa. xxxiii. 17. Milt. b. xi. v. 707.

“darkly, but face to face!” to have all thy goodness, all thy greatness, shine before us; and be made glad for ever with the brightest discovery of thy perfections, with the ineffable joy of thy countenance!

This we cannot bear, in our present imperfect state. The effulgence of unveiled Divinity, would dazzle a mortal sight. Our feeble faculties, would be *overwhelmed* with such a *fulness* of superabundant bliss; and must lie *oppressed*, under such an exceeding great, eternal *weight* of glory.—But, when this corruptible hath put on incorruption, the powers of the soul will be greatly invigorated; and these earthly tabernacles, will be transformed into the likeness of CHRIST’S glorious body. Then, though “the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed,”* when the LORD of hosts is revealed from heaven; yet shall his faithful people be enabled to “see him as he is.”†

Here then, my wishes, here be fixed. Be *this* your determined and invariable aim.—Here, my affections, here give a loose to your whole ardour. Cry out in the language of inspiration; “This one thing have I desired of the LORD,” which, with incessant earnestness, “I will require; that I may dwell in the *celestial* house of the LORD, all the days of my *future* life; to behold the *fair* beauty of the LORD,”‡ and to contemplate, with wonder and adoration—with unspeakable and everlasting rapture—all the attributes of the incomprehensible Godhead.

SOLOMON, a most penetrating judge of human nature, knowing how highly mankind is charmed with the fine qualities of flowers; has figured out the blessed JESUS, that “fairest among ten thousand,”

* Isaiah xxiv. 23.

† 1 John iii. 2.

‡ Psal. xxvii. 4.

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“ sand,” by these lovely representatives. He styles him “ the rose of Sharon, * and the lily of the “ valleys;” † like the first, full of delights and communicable grace; like the last, exalted in majesty, and complete in beauty.—In that sacred pastoral, he ranges the creation; borrows its most finished forms, and dips his pencil in its choicest dyes, to present us with a sketch of the amiableness of his person. His amiableness, who is the light of the world; the glory of his church; the only hope, the sovereign consolation of sinners; and exalted, infinitely exalted, not only above the sublimest comparison, but even “ above all blessing “ and praise.”—May I also make the same heavenly use of all sublunary enjoyments! Whatever is pleasurable, or charming *below*; let it raise my desire to those delectable objects, which are *above*: which will yield, not partial, but perfect felicity: not transient, but never-ending, satisfaction and joy.—Yes, my soul, let these beauties in *miniature*, always remind thee of that glorious person; in whom “ dwells all the *fulness* of the Godhead *bodily*.” Let these little emanations, teach thee to thirst after the eternal fountain. O! may the creatures, be the constant clue to the Creator! For this is a certain truth, and deserves thy frequent recollection,

* Cant. ii. 1.

*Malus ut arboribus decori est, ut vitibus uva,
Ulque rosæ campis, ut lilia vallibus alba,
Sic Christus decus omne juis—*

† By the *lily of the valleys*, I apprehend is meant, not the flower which commonly passes under that denomination, and is comparatively mean; but the grand, majestic, garden lily, growing in a rich irriguous soil, where it flourishes in the most ample manner, and arrives at the highest perfection. The circumstance of the valleys, added by the sacred writer, is significant not of the *species*, but of the *place*.—This is by far the noblest interpretation, and most exactly suitable to the spiritual sense; which intimates, that the blessed Jesus delights to dwell, by the communications of his Spirit, in *bumble hearts*.—ששנת העמק—*Lilium vallibus gaudens.*

lection, demands thy most attentive consideration, that the whole compass of finite perfection is only a faint *ray*, shot from that immense source*—is only a small *drop*, derived from that inexhaustible ocean—of all good.

What a surprising *variety* is observable, among the flowery tribes! how has the bountiful hand of Providence, diversified these nicest pieces of his workmanship! added the charms of an endless novelty, to all their other perfections!—A constant uniformity would soon render the entertainment tiresome, or insipid; therefore every species is formed on a separate plan, and exhibits something entirely *new*. The fashion spreads not from family to family; but every one has a mode of its own, which is truly original. The most cursory glance, perceives an apparent difference, as well as a peculiar delicacy, in the *airs* and *habits*, the *attitude* and *lineaments* of every distinct class.

Some rear their heads with a majestic mien; and overlook, like *soverieigns* or *nobles*, the whole parterre. Others seem more moderate in their aims, and advance only to the middle stations; a genius turned for heraldry, might term them, the *gentry* of the border. While others, free from all aspiring views, creep unambitiously on the ground, and look like the *commonalty* of the kind.—Some are intersected with elegant *stripes*, or fludded with radiant *spots*. Some affect to be genteely *powdered*, or neatly *fringed*; while others are plain in their aspect, unaffected in their dress, and content to please with a naked *simplicity*. Some assume the monarch's *purple*, some look most becoming in the virgin's

* ——— Thou sit'st above all heavens,
To us invisible, or dimly seen
In these thy lowest works; yet these declare
Thy goodness beyond thought, and pow'r divine:

virgin's *white*; but *black*, doleful black, has no admittance into the wardrobe of spring. The weeds of mourning would be a manifest indecorum, when nature holds an universal festival. She would now inspire none but delightful ideas; and therefore always makes her appearance in some amiable suit.* Here *stands* a warrior, clad with crimson; there *sits* a magistrate, robed in scarlet; and yonder *struts* a pretty fellow, that seems to have dipped his plumes in the rainbow, and glitters in all the gay colours of that resplendent arch. Some *rise* into a curious cup, or *fall* into a set of beautiful bells; some *spread* themselves in a swelling tuft, or croud into a delicious cluster.—In some, the predominant stain, softens by the gentlest *diminutions*: till it has even stole away from itself. The eye is amused at the agreeable delusion; and we wonder to find ourselves insensibly decoyed, into a quite different lustre. In others, you would think, the fine tinges were emulous of pre-eminence. Disdaining to mingle, they *confront* one another, with the resolution of rivals, determined to dispute the prize of beauty; while each is improved, by the opposition, into the highest vivacity of complexion.

“How manifold are thy works, O LORD!”* multiplied even to a prodigy. Yet “in wisdom,” consummate wisdom, “hast thou made them all.” How I admire the *vastness* of the contrivance, and the *exactness* of the execution! man, feeble man, with difficulty accomplishes a single work. Hardly, and after many efforts, does he arrive at a tolerable imitation, of some one production of nature. But the almighty Artist spoke millions of substances, into instantaneous being; the whole collection wonderfully various, and each individual completely

* ——— *Nunc formosissimus annus.*

Virg.

† In full beauty blooms the laughing year.

† Psalm civ. 24.

ly perfect.—Repeated experiments generally I might say, always discover errors or defects, in *our* happiest inventions. Nay, what wins our approbation, at the present hour, or in this particular place, is very probably, in some remote period or some distant clime, treated with contempt. Whereas, *these* fine structures have pleased every taste, in every country, for almost six thousand years. Nor has any fault been detected in the original plan, nor any room left for the least improvement upon the first model. *—All our performances, the more *minutely* they are scanned, the more *imperfect* they appear. With regard to these delicate objects, The more we search into their properties, the more we are ravished with their graces. They are sure to disclose fresh strokes of the most masterly skill; in proportion to the attention, with which they are examined.

Nor is the *simplicity* of the *operation* less astonishing, than the accuracy of the workmanship, or the infinitude of the effects. Should you ask, “where
“and what are the materials, which beautify the
“blooming world? what rich tints; what splendid
“dyes; what stores of shining crions; stand by
“the heavenly limner, when he paints the robe of
“nature?” It is answered, his powerful pencil needs no such costly apparatus. A single principle, under his conducting hand, branches out into an immensity of the most varied, and most finished forms. The *moisture* of the earth, and of the circumambient air, passed through proper strainers, and disposed in a range of pellucid tubes: this performs all the wonders, and produces all the beauties of vegetation. This *creeps* along the fibres of the low-spread moss; and *climbs* to the very tops of the lofty waving cedars. This, attracted by the
root,

* Ecclef. iii. 14. “I know, that whatsoever God doth, it shall
“be for ever; nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from
“it.”

root, and circulating through invisible canals; this bursts into gems; expands itself into leaves; and clothes the forest, with all its verdant honours.—This one, *plain* and *simple* cause,* gives birth to all the charms which deck the youth, and maturity, of the year. This *blushes* in the early hepatica; and *flames*, in the late advancing poppy. This *reddens* into blood, in the viens of the mulberry; and *attenuates* itself into leafen gold to create a covering for the quince. This *breathes*, in all the fragrant gales of our garden; and *sweeps* odorous gum, in the groves of *Arabia*.—So *wonderful* is our Creator *in counsel*, and so *excellent in working*! †

In a grove of tulips, or a knot of pinks, one perceives a difference in almost every individual. Scarce any two, are turned, and tintured, exactly alike. Each allows himself a little *particularity* in his *dress*, though all belong to one family; so that they are various, and yet the same.—A pretty emblem this of the *smaller differences* between Protestant Christians. There are modes in religion, which admit of variation, without prejudice to sound faith, or real holiness. Just as the drapery, on these pictures of the spring, may be formed after a variety of patterns, without blemishing their beauty, or altering their nature.—Be it so then, that in some points of inconsiderable consequence, several of our brethren dissent, yet let us all live amicably and sociably together; for we harmonize in *principles*, though we vary in *punctilios*. Let us join in conversation, and intermingle interests; discover no estrangement of behaviour, and cherish

no

* “When every several effect has a particular separate cause, this gives no pleasure to the spectator, as not discovering contrivance. But that work is beheld with admiration and delight, as the result of deep counsel, which is *complicated* in its *parts*, and yet *simple* in its *operations*. Where a great variety of effects are seen to arise from one principle operating uniformly.”

Abernethy on the attributes.

† Isaiah xxviii. 29.

no alienation of affection. If any strife subsists, let it be to follow our divine master most closely in humility of heart, and unblameableness of life. Let it be to serve one another most readily, in all the kind offices of cordial friendship. Thus shall we be *united*, though *distinguished*; united in the same grand fundamentals, though distinguished by some small circumstantialia; united in one important bond of brotherly-love, though distinguished by some slighter peculiarities of sentiment.

Between Christians, whose judgments disagree only about a form of prayer, or manner of worship, I apprehend, there is no more *essential* difference, than between flowers which bloom from the same kind of seed, but happen to be somewhat diversified in the mixture of their colours.——

Whereas, if *one* denies the divinity of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, and degrades the incarnate GOD to the meanness of a mere creature; if *another* cries up the worthiness of human works, and depreciates the alone meritorious righteousness of the glorious Mediator; if a *third* addresses the incommunicable honours to a finite being, and bows to the image, or prays to the saint—these are errors, extremely derogatory to the REDEEMER'S dignity, and not a little prejudicial to the comfort of his people. Against these to remonstrate; against these to urge every argument, and use every dissuasive; bespeaks not the censorious bigot, but the friend of truth, and the lover of mankind.——

Whereas to stand neuter and silent, while such principles are propagated, would be an instance of criminal remissness rather than of Christian moderation.——For the *persons*, we will not fail to maintain a tender compassion: we will not cease to put up earnest intercessions; we will also acknowledge and love, whatever is excellent and amiable in their character. Yet we dare not subscribe their *creed*; we must not secrete our strong reasons; we

cannot remit our assiduous, but kind endeavours ; if by any means we may reconcile them to a more *scriptural* belief, and a *purser* worship. *

ANOTHER remarkable circumstance, recommending and endearing the flowery creation, is their *regular succession*. They make not their appearance all at once, but in an orderly rotation. While a proper number of these obliging retainers are in waiting, the others abscond ; but hold themselves in a posture of service, ready to take their turn, and fill each his respective station, the instant it becomes vacant.—The *snowdrop*, foremost of the lovely train, breaks her way through the frozen soil, in order to present her early compliments to her Lord. Dressed in the robe of innocence, she steps forth, fearless of danger ; long before the trees have ventured to unfold their leaves, even while the icicles are pendent on our houses.—Next peeps out the *crocus* ; but cautiously, and with an air of timidity. She hears the howling blasts, and sculks close to her low situation. Afraid she seems, to make large excursions from her root ; while so many ruffian winds are abroad, and scouring along the æther.—Nor is the *violet* last, in this shining embassy of the year. Which, with all the embellishments, that would grace a royal garden, condescends to line our hedges, and grow at the feet of briers. Freely, and without any solicitation, she distributes the bounty of her emissive sweets :

* In some former editions, I expressed myself on this point *un-
warily* and *harshly*. But my meaning, and real sentiments, were no other than those represented above.—The reader, from such unguarded intimations, might too naturally be led to conclude, that the author avows, and would stir up, a *spirit of persecution*. But this is a method of dealing with opponents in religious doctrines which he disclaims, as absurd ; and abhors, as iniquitous. He is for no force, but that of rational conviction ; for no constraint, but that of affectionate persuasion. “ Thus,” if you please, “ compel them to come in.” Luke xiv. 23.

sweets: while herself, with an exemplary humility, retires from sight; seeking rather to administer pleasure, than to win admiration.* Emblem, expressive emblem, of those *modest* virtues, which delight to bloom in obscurity; which extend a cheering influence to multitudes, who are scarce acquainted with the source of their comforts! Motive, engaging motive, to that *ever-active* beneficence; which stays not for the importunity of the distressed, but anticipates their suit, and prevents them with the blessing of its goodness!—The poor *polyanthus*, that lately adorned the border with her sparkling beauties; and, transplanted into our windows, gave us a fresh entertainment; is now no more. I saw her complexion fade; I perceived her breath decay; till at length she expired, and dropt into her grave.—Scarce have we sustained this loss, but in comes the *auricula*, and more than retrieves it. Arrayed she comes, in a splendid variety of amiable forms; with an eye of crystal, and garments of the most glossy satin; exhaling perfume, and powdered with silver. A very distinguished procession this! the favourite care of the florist! Scarce one among them, but is dignified with a character of renown; or has the honour to represent some celebrated toast. But these also, notwithstanding their illustrious titles, have exhausted their whole stock of fragrance, and are mingled with the meanest dust.—Who could forbear grieving at their departure, did not the *tulips* begin to raise themselves on their fine wands, or stately stalks? They flush the parterre with one of the gayest dresses, that blooming nature wears. Did ever *beau* or *belle* make so gaudy an appearance, in a birth-night suit? Here, one may behold the innocent wantonness of beauty. Here, she indulges a thousand freaks, and sports herself in the most charming

* *Prodesse quam conspici.*

charming diversity of colours. Yet I should wrong her, were I to call her a *coquet*; because she plays her lovely changes, not to enkindle dissolute affections, but to display her Creator's glory.—Soon arises the *anemone*; encircled at the bottom, with a spreading robe; and rounded, at the top, into a beautiful dome. In its loosely-flowing mantle, you may observe a noble negligence; in its gently bending tufts, the nicest symmetry. I would term it the *fine gentleman* of the garden; because it seems to have learned the singular address, of uniting simplicity with refinement, of reconciling art and ease.—The same month has the merit of producing the *ranunculus*. All bold and graceful, it expands the riches of its foliage; and acquires, by degrees, the loveliest enamel in the world. As persons of intrinsic worth, disdain the superficial arts of recommendation, practised by *fops*; so this lordly flower scorns to borrow any of its excellence, from powders and essences. It needs no such attractives, to render it the darling of the curious; being sufficiently engaging from the elegance of its figure, the radiant variety of its tinges, and a certain superior dignity of aspect.—Methinks, nature improves in her operations. Her latest strokes are most masterly. To crown the collection, she introduces the *carnation*. Which captivates every eye, with a noble spread of graces; and charms another sense, with a profusion of exquisite odours. This single flower has centered in itself, the perfections of all the preceding. The moment it appears, it so commands our attention, that we scarce regret the absence of the rest.—The *gilly-flower*, like a real friend, attends you through all the vicissitudes and alterations of the season. While others make a transient visit only, this is rather an inhabitant, than a guest in your gardens; adds *fidelity* to *complaisance*.

It

It is in vain to attempt a catalogue of these amiable gifts! There is an endless *multiplicity*, in their characters; yet an invariable *order*, in their approaches. Every month, almost every week, has its peculiar ornaments; not servilely copying the works of its predecessor, but forming, still forming, and still executing some new design. So lavish is the fancy, yet so exact is the process, of nature.

Here, let me stand a while, to contemplate this *distribution* of flowers, through the several periods of the year.—Were they all to blossom together there would be at once a promiscuous *throng*, and at once a total *privation*. We should scarce have an opportunity, of adverting to the dainty qualities of half; and must soon lose the agreeable company of them all. But now, since every species has a separate post to occupy; and a distinct interval for appearing; we can take a leisurely and minute survey of each succeeding set. We can view and review their forms; enter into a more intimate acquaintance with their charming accomplishments: and receive all those pleasing services, which they are commissioned to yield.—This remarkable piece of œconomy, is productive of another very valuable effect. It not only places, in the most advantageous light, every particular community; but is also a sure provisionary resource, against the frailty of the whole nation. Or, to speak more truly, it renders the flowery tribes a sort of *immortal corps*.* For, though some are continually dropping; yet by this expedient, others are as continually rising, to beautify our borders, and prolong the entertainment.

What

* In allusion to the celebrated practice of the Persian kings: “who maintained, for their life-guard, a body of troops called *immortal*, because it perpetually subsisted; for as soon as any of the men died, another was immediately put into his place.”

Rollin's ancient history, Vol. II.

What *goodness* is this, to provide such a series of gratifications for mankind! both to diversify, and perpetuate the fine collation! to take care, that our paths should be, in a manner, incessantly strewed with flowers!—And what *wisdom*, to bid every one of these insensible beings, know the precise juncture for their coming forth! inasmuch that no actor on a stage, can be more exact in performing his part; can make a more regular entry, or a more punctual exit.

Who emboldens the *daffodil* to venture abroad in *February*; and to trust her flowering gold, with inclement and treacherous skies? Who informs the various tribes of *fruit-bearing blossoms*; that vernal suns and a more genial warmth, are fittest for their delicate texture; who teaches the *clove* to stay; till hotter beams are prepared, to infuse a spicy richness into her odours, and endure her complexion with the deepest crimson?—Who disposes these beautiful troops, into such orderly bodies; *retarding* some, and *accelerating* others? Who has instructed them to *file off*, with such perfect regularity as soon as the duty of their respective station is over? and, when one detachment retires, who gives the signal, for another immediately to *advance*? Who, but that unerring Providence, which, from the highest thrones of angels, to the very lowest degrees of existence, orders all things “in number, weight, and measure!”

These, O my soul, are the regulations of that most adorable, that most beneficent Being, who bowed the heavens; came down to dwell on earth; and united the *frailty* of thy mortal nature, to all the *glories* of his Godhead. All the honour of this admirable establishment, belongs to thy ransom, thy Surety, thy Saviour. To him it belongs who sustained the *vengeance*, which thou hadst deserved, and was doomed to suffer; who fulfilled
the

the *obedience*, which thou wast obliged, but unable, to perform; and who humbled himself (stupendous, ineffable loving kindness!) humbled himself to death, even the death of the cross. He formed this vast machine, and adjusted its nice dependencies. The pillars, that support it; the embellishments, that adorn it; and the laws, that govern it; are the result of his unsearchable counsels. O! the *heights* of his majesty, and the *depths* of his abasement!

Which shall we admire most, his essential *greatness*, or his free *grace*? He created the exalted seraph, that sings in glory: and every the minutest insect, that flutters in air, or crawls in dust. He marks out a path, for all those globes of light, which travel the circuit of the skies; and disdains not to rear the violet from its lowly bed, or to plait the daisy which dresses our plains. So *grand* are his operations; yet so *condescending* his regards!—If summer like a sparkling bride, is brilliant and glorious in her apparel; what is this, but a feeble reflection of his uncreated *effulgence*? If autumn, like a munificent host, opens her stores, and gives us all things richly to enjoy; what is this but a little taste of his inexhaustible *liberality*? If thunders roar, you hear the sound of his trumpet: If lightnings glare, you see the launching of his glittering spear: If “the perpetual hills be scattered, and “the everlasting mountains bowed,” you behold a *display*—no, says the prophet, you have rather “the hiding of his power.”* So immense is his
power

* Hab. iii. 4. Nothing can be more magnificently conceived, than the *imagery* of this whole chapter; and upon the foot of our interpretation, nothing was ever more delicately and nobly turned, than the *sentiment* of this clause. Other senses of the passage, I acknowledge, may be assigned with equal propriety. But none, I think, can be imagined so *majestic* and *sublime*. As the original will fairly admit of it; as it carries no disagreement with the context; and expresses a most important, as well as undoubted truth; I

power ; so uncontrollable and inconceivable ; that all these mighty works are but a *sketch*, in which more is concealed than discovered.

Thus, I think, we should always view the visible system ; with an evangelical *telescope* (if I may be allowed the expression,) and with an evangelical *microscope*. Regarding CHRIST JESUS, as the great projector and architect ; who planned, and executed, the amazing scheme. Whatever is magnificent or valuable ; tremendous or amiable ; should ever be ascribed to the Redeemer. This is the Christian's *natural philosophy*. With regard to this method of considering the things that are seen ! we have an inspired apostle, for our preceptor and precedent. Speaking of CHRIST, he says ; " Thou, LORD, " in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the " earth ; and the heavens are the work of thy " hands."——Did we carefully attend to this leading principle, in all our examinations of nature ; it would, doubtless, be a most powerful means of *enkindling* our love, and *strengthening* our faith.

I hope I may be permitted to use it, at least by way of accommodation.—Especially, as it suggests one of the finest *mottos* imaginable, wherewith to inscribe all the visible productions of the Creator's hand. When, struck with astonishment, we consider their grandeur, beauty, and consummate perfections ; let us, in justice to their author, apply the exalted reflection of this sacred ode :—
 " In all these is the *biding*, rather than an adequate display, of his " matchless power. Though they challenge our praise, and surpass our comprehension, yet are they by no means the utmost " exertions, but rather some slighter essays, of omnipotent skill."——Milton, relating the overthrow of the fallen angels, introduces a grand circumstance, not much unlike the preceding. Messiah, unaided and alone, had routed an innumerable host of apostate spirits. This was great and marvellous. But to create a juster idea of the illustrious conqueror, our poet beautifully adds :

" Yet half his strength he put not forth."

If we forget to make the same remark, when we contemplate God in his works, we must necessarily form very scanty conceptions of that SUPREME BEING ; before whom all nations are as a " drop " of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance."

faith. * When I look round upon millions of noble substances, and carry with me this transporting reflection, "The Maker of them all expired on a cross for me;" how can I remain any longer indifferent? Must not the *coldest* heart, begin to glow with gratitude?—When I survey an immensity of the finest productions imaginable; and remember, that the author of them all, is my "righteousness and my redemption;" how can I chuse but repose the most *cheerful* confidence in such a Mediator.

Let me add one more remark, upon the admirable *adjustment* of every particular, relating to these fine colonies planted in the parterre—With such

* The apostles, I observe, delight to use this method of displaying the *honours* of the Redeemer, and establishing the *faith* of his people.—The beloved disciple, teaching that most precious doctrine, "of a Lamb slain to take away the sins of the world;" in order to evince the sufficiency of CHRIST's sacrifice for this blessed purpose, affirms, "that all things were made by him: and without him was not any thing," no, not so much as one single being "made." John i. 3.—St. Paul, preaching the same glad tidings to the Colossians, and expressly maintaining, that we have redemption through his blood, seems to foresee an objection of this kind. "To expiate transgressions against an infinite Majesty, is a most prodigious act. It must cost vastly more than any common surety can pay, to redeem a sinful world. What reason have we to believe, that JESUS is equal to this mighty undertaking?" All possible reason, replies the apostle, from the dignity of his person, for he is "the image of the invisible GOD;" and from the greatness of his works, for "by him all things were made." Consider the operations of his hands, and you cannot doubt the atoning efficacy of his death. Col. i. 15, 16.—The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, falls exactly into the same train of arguing, declaring that CHRIST JESUS has purged our sins, by the sacrifice of himself; he proves his ample ability for this tremendous office, from his essential excellence, because he is "the brightness of his Father's glory;" and from his admirable works, because "he made the worlds, and upholdeth all things by the word of his power." Heb. i. 2, 3.—Which truth, as it is so important in itself; of such signal comfort to Christians, and so particularly insisted on by the inspired writers, I hope I shall need no apology for an attempt to illustrate and enforce it, in a kind of *evangelical descent* upon creation, annexed to these reflections.

such accuracy and correctness is their structure finished, that any of the least conceivable alteration, would very much impair their perfection. Should you see, for instance, the nice disposition of the *tulip's* attire fly abroad, disorderly and irregular, like the flaunting *woodbine*; should the *jeffamine* rear her diminutive head, on those grand columns which support the *hollihock*: should the erect and manly aspect of the *piony*, hang down with a pensive air, like the flexile bells of the *hyacinth*: should that noble plainness, which distinguishes the *lily*, be exchanged for the glittering fringes, which edge the *pink*; or the gaudy stains, which bedrop the *iris*: should those tapering pillars which arise in the middle of its vase, and tip with golden pendants, give such a lustre to the surrounding panels of alabaster—should those sink and disappear, like the chives which cover the heart of the *anemone*:—In many of these cases, would not the transposition be fantastical and aukward? in all, to the apparent *prejudice* of every individual?

Again, with regard to the *time* of their appearing; this circumstance is settled, by a remarkable foresight and precaution. What would become of the *sailor*, if, in very stormy weather, he should raise a lofty mast, and croud it with all his canvas! Such would be the ill effect, if the most stately species of flowers, should presume to come abroad, in the blustering months. Ah! how would they rue the imprudent boldness! therefore, those only that shoot the shortest stems, and display the smallest spread of leaves, or (if you please) carry the least sail, are launched amidst the blowing seasons.—How injudiciously would the *perfumer* act, if he should unseal his finest essences, and expose them to the northern winds; or wintry rains! our blooming artists of the aromatic profession, at least, the most delicate among them, seem perfectly aware of the consequences of such a procedure. Accordingly,

ingly, they postpone the opening of their odoriferous treasures; till a serener air,* and more unclouded skies, grant a protection to their amiable traffic; till they are under no more apprehensions, of having their spicy cells rifled by rude blasts, or drowned in incessant showers.

What a striking argument is here for *resignation*; unfeigned resignation, to all the disposals of *Providence*! Too often are our dissatisfied thoughts apt to find fault with divine dispensations. We tacitly arraign our Maker's conduct, or question his kindness with regard to ourselves. We fancy our lot, not so commodiously situated; or our condition, not so happily circumstanced; as if we had been placed in some other station of life.—But let us behold this exquisitely nice regulation of the *minute* plants, and be ashamed of our *repining* folly. Could any fibre in their composition, be altered;

OR

* Cassimir, in a very poetical manner, addresses himself to the dormant rose; and most prettily invites her to *venture abroad*, by the mention of these two circumstances:

*Siderum sacros imitata vallis,
Quid laes dudum, rosa? delicatum
Effert e terris caput, O tepentis
Filia caeli.*

*Jam tibi nubes fugiunt aquosæ,
Quas fugant albis Zephyri quadrigis;
Jam tibi mulcet Boream jocantis
Aura Favoni.*

Child of the Summer, charming Rose,
No longer in confinement lie;
Arise to light, thy form disclose;
Rival the spangles of the sky.

The rains are gone, the storms are o'er;
Winter retires to make thee way:
Come then, thou sweetly blushing flow'r;
Come, lovely stranger, come away.

The sun is dress'd in beaming smiles,
To give thy beauties to the day:
Young zephyrs wait with gentlest gales,
To fan thy bosom as they play.

or one line in their features, be transposed; without clouding some of their beauties? could any fold in their vestments be varied; or any link in their orderly succession be broken; without injuring some delicate property? And does not that All-seeing eye, which preserves so exact a harmony among these *pretty toys*, maintain as watchful a care over his *rational creatures*? Does he chuse the properest season, for the cowslip to arise, and drink the dews? and can he neglect the concerns, or misjudge the conveniencies, of his sons and daughters? He, who has so completely disposed, whatever pertains to the vegetable œconomy; that the least diminution or addition would certainly hurt the finished scheme; does without all peradventure, preside, with equal attention, over the interests of his own people.

Be still, then, thou uneasy mortal; * know, that God is unerringly wise; and be assured, that, amidst the greatest multiplicity of beings, he does not overlook thee. Thy Saviour has given me authority to assert, that thou art of far superior value in the estimate of Omnipotence, than all the herbage of the field.—If his sacred will ordains

sickness

* *Permittas ipsis expendere numinibus, quid
Conveniat nobis, rebusque sit utile nostris.
Nam pro juvenilibus aptissima quæque dabunt dii.
Carior est illis homo, quam sibi.*—————

Juv.

Since all the downward tracts of time
God's watchful eye surveys;
O! who so wise to chuse our lot,
And regulate our ways?

Since none can doubt his equal love,
Unmeasurably kind;
To his *unerring, gracious will*,
Be ev'ry wish resign'd.

Good when he gives, supremely good;
Nor less, when he denies;
Ev'n crosses, from his sov'reign hand,
Are blessings in disguise.

sickness for thy portion, never dare to imagine, that uninterrupted health would be more advantageous. If he pleases to with-hold, or take away, *children*; never presume to conclude, that thy happiness is blasted, because thy hopes of an increasing family are disappointed. He that marshals all the starry host, and so accurately arranges every the meanest species of herbs; HE orders all the *peculiarities*, all the *changes* of thy state, with a vigilance, that nothing can elude; with a goodness, that endureth for ever. Bow thy head, therefore, in humble acquiescence. Rest satisfied, that *whatever is*, by the appointment of Heaven, * *is right*, is best.

AMONG all the productions of the third creating-day, this of flowers seems to be peculiarly designed for man. Man has the *monopoly* of this favour; it is conferred on him, by a sort of exclusive charter. See the *Imperial crown*, splendid and beautifully grand! See the *tuberoſe*, delicate and languishingly fair! See all the pomp and glory of the

* "Whatever is, is right."——If Mr. Pope understands the maxim according to the *limitation* suggested above, he speaks a most undeniable and glorious truth. But if that great poet includes whatever comes to pass, through the wild and extravagant passions of men; surely no thinking person, at least no Christian, can accede to his opinion.——What God orders is *wise*, beyond all possibility of correction; and *good*, above all that we can ask or think, His decrees are the result of infinite discernment; and his dispensations the issues of unbounded benevolence.—But man, fallen man, is hurried away by his lusts into a thousand irregularities: which are deplorably evil in *themselves*, and attended with *consequences* manifestly pernicious to society ——Let the sentiment, therefore, be restrained to the disposals of Heaven, and I most readily subscribe it. But, if it be extended to the conduct of men, and the effects of their folly, I think myself obliged to enter my protest against it. For whatever kindles the divine indignation—is cause of final ruin to the author—is strictly forbidden by God's holy word—is contrary to the whole design of his revealed will, and the very reverse of his essential attributes——*This* cannot possibly be right. *This* is most undoubtedly wrong. Omnipotence, indeed, can over-rule it, and educe good from it. But the very notion of *over-ruling*, supposes it to be absolutely *wrong* in itself.

the parterre ; were paint and perfume do wonders. Yet the inferior animals are neither smit with their beauties, nor regaled with their odours. The horse never stands still, to gaze upon their charms ; nor does the ox turn aside, to browse upon their sweets. Senses they have, to discern these curious objects in the *gross* ; but no taste, to *distinguish* or relish their fine accomplishments.—Just so, carnal and unenlightened men, may understand the literal meaning of scripture ; may comprehend the evidences of its divine inspiration ; yet have no ardent *longing* for the spiritual blessings it offers ; and see “ no form “ or comeliness” in the Saviour it describes, so as to render him the *supreme* desire of their souls.

The *chief* end of these beautiful appearances, philosophers say, is to enfold and cherish the embryo seed ; or to swathe the tender body, during its infant state.—But, whatever is the chief end of nature, it is certain, she never departs from the design, of administering *delight* to mankind.*—This is inseparably connected with her other views.—Were it only to secure a reproductive principle, what need of such *elegant complication* ? Why so much art employed, and so many decorations added ? Why should vestments be prepared, richer than brocades ; more delicate than lawns ; and of a finer glow, than the most admired velvets ?—If the great mother had no other aim, than barely to accommodate her little offspring ; warm flannel, or homely fustian, would have served his turn ; served

* “ We find that the most important parts in the vegetable world, “ are those which are the most beautiful. These are the seeds by “ which the several races of plants are propagated and continued, “ and which are always lodged in flowers or blossoms. Nature “ seems to hide her principal design, and to be industrious in making the earth gay and delightful, while she is carrying on her “ great work, and intent upon her own preservation.”

ed it, full as well as the most sumptuous tissues, or all the furniture of the mercer's shop.

Evident then it is, that flowers were endued with such enchanting graces, for the *pleasure* of man. In pursuance of this original intention, they have always paid their court to the human race; they still seem particularly solicitous of recommending themselves to our regard. The finest of each spices croud about our habitations; and are rarely to be seen, at a distance from our abodes. They *thrive* under our cultivating hand, and observing eye; but degenerate, and *pine away*, if unguarded by their lord.—To win his attention, and deck his retreats, they hide their deformities under ground; and display nothing but the most *graceful* forms, and *engaging* colours, to his sight.—To merit a farther degree of his esteem, the generality of them dispense a delightful perfume. What is still more obliging, they reserve their *richest* exhalations, * to embalm his morning and evening walks. † Because he usually chuses those cool hours, to recreate himself among their blooming ranks; therefore, at those hours, they are most lavish of their fragrance, and breathe out their choicest spirits.

O man, greatly beloved by thy Creator! the darling of Providence! thou art distinguished by *his goodness*; distinguish thyself also by *thy gratitude*. Be it thy one undevoted aim, to glorify him; who has been at so much expence, to gratify thee?—While all these inferior creatures, in *silent eloquence*, declare the glory of GOD; do thou lend them

* ————— The flowers,
That open now their choicest bosom'd smells,
Reserv'd from night, and kept for thee in store. Milt.

† The twining jessmine, and the blushing rose,
With lavish grace their *morning* scents disclose;
The smelling tub'rose and jonquil declare
The stronger impulse of an *evening* air, Prior's Sol.

them thy *tongue*. Be thou the high priest of the mute creation. Let their praises become vocal in thy songs.—Adore the supreme Benefactor, for the blessings he showers down, upon every order of beings. Adore him for numberless mercies which are appropriated to thyself. But, above all, adore him, for that noble gift of a *rational*, and *immortal* soul.—This constitutes us masters of the globe, and gives us the real enjoyment of its riches. This discovers ten thousand beauties, which otherwise had been lost; and renders them both a source of delights, and a nursery of devotion.—By virtue of this exalted principle, we are qualified to admire our Maker's works, and capable of *bearing* his illustrious *image*: bearing his illustrious image, not only when these ornaments of the ground, have resigned their honours; but when the great origin of day, is extinguished in the skies; and all the flaming orbs on high, are put out in obscure darkness.—*Then* to survive; to survive the ruins of one world, and to enjoy GOD—to resemble GOD—to be “filled with all the fulness of GOD,” in another—what a happiness, what an inestimable happiness is this! Yet *this* is thy privilege, (barter it not, for trifles of an hour!), this thy glorious prerogative, O man!

O! the goodness, the *exuberant goodness*, of our GOD! I cannot forbear celebrating it once more, before I pass to another consideration.—How much should we think ourselves obliged, to a generous friend, who should *build* a stately edifice*, purely

* I cannot persuade myself, that the comparison is stretched beyond proper bounds, when carried to this pitch. It is my steadfast opinion, that the world, at least this lower world, with its various appurtenances, was intended *purely* for man; that it is *appropriated* to him; and that he (in subordination to GOD's glory) is the end of its creation.—Other animals, it is true, partake of the Creator's benefits: but then, they partake under the notion of man's domestics, or on the foot of retainers to him; as creatures
which

purely for our abode! But how greatly would the obligation be increased, if the hand that built should

which bear some relation to his service, and some way or other contribute to his good. So that still he is the *centre* of the whole; or, as our incomparable Milton, equally master of poetry and divinity, expresses himself, "All things live for man." *Par. Lost*. b. xi. l. 161.

Mr. Pope, in his ethic epistles, is pleased to explode this tenet, as the height of *pride*, and a gross *absurdity*.—For my part, I see no reason for such a charge. With all submission to so superior a genius, it seems very remote from pride, to be duly sensible of favours vouchsafed; to contemplate them in all the extent of their munificence, and to acknowledge them accordingly. I should rather imagine, that to contract their size, when they are immensely large; to stint their number, when they are altogether innumerable; that such a procedure favours more of *insensibility*, than our hypothesis of presumption; and has more in it of *ingratitude*, than that of arrogance.

And how can it be deemed an absurdity, to maintain that God gave us a *world* for our possession; when it is our duty to believe, that he gave us his *only Son* for our propitiation? Sure, it can be neither difficult nor extravagant to suppose, that he designed the habitable globe, with its whole furniture, for our present use, since he withheld not his holy Child JESUS, but freely delivered him up for our final salvation.

Upon the whole, I cannot but conclude, that the attempt of our famous poet is neither *kind*, with regard to his fellow-creatures,—nor *grateful*, with regard to his Creator;—neither is his scheme, in fact, *true*. The attempt not *kind*, with regard to man; because it robs him of one of the most delightful and ravishing contemplations imaginable. To consider the great author of existence as having *me* in his eye, when he formed universal nature; as contriving all things with an immediate view to the exigencies of my particular state; and making them all in such a manner as might be most conducive to my particular advantage; this must occasion the strongest satisfactions, whenever I cast a glance on the objects that surround me.—Not *grateful*, with regard to God; because it has the most direct tendency to diminish our sense of his kindness, and by that means to throw a damp upon our gratitude. It teaches us to look upon ourselves, as almost lost among a croud of other beings, or regarded only with an occasional and incidental beneficence. Which must certainly weaken the disposition, and indeed slacken the ties, to the most adoring thankfulness.—To which I apprehend, we may justly add, neither is the scheme, in fact, *true*. For, not to mention what might be urged from the sure word of revelation, this one argument appears sufficiently conclusive. The world began with man; the world must cease with man; consequently, the grand use, the principal end of the world, is, to subserve the interest

should also *furnish* it! and not only furnish it, with all that is commodious and comfortable; but *ornament* it also, with whatever is splendored and delightful! *This* has our most indulgent Creator done, in a manner infinitely surpassing all we could wish, or imagine.

The *earth* is assigned us for a dwelling—The *skies* are stretched over us, like a magnificent canopy, dyed in the purest azure; and beautified, now with pictures of floating silver, now with colourings of reflected crimson.—The *grass* is spread under us, as a spacious carpet; wove with silken threads of green, and damasked with flowers of every hue.—The *sun*, like a golden lamp, is hung out in the ethereal vault; and pours his effulgence, all the day to lighten our paths—When night approaches, the *moon* takes up the friendly office; and the *stars* are kindled in twinkling myriads, to cheer the darkness with their milder lustre, not disturb our repose by too intense a glare.—The *clouds*, besides the rich paintings they hang around the heavens, act the part of a shifting screen: and defend us, by their seasonable interposition, from the

interest of man. It is on all sides agreed, that the edifice was erected when man was to be furnished with an habitation; and that it will be demolished when man has no farther need of its accommodations. When he enters into the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, “the earth and all the works that are therein shall be burnt up.” From which it seems a very obvious and fair deduction, that man is the *final cause* of this inferior creation.

So that I think my readers and myself *privileged* (not to say, on the principles of gratitude, *obliged*) to use those lovely lines of our author, with a propriety and truth equal to their elegance and beauty:

- “ For *me* kind nature wakes her genial pow’r,
- “ Suckles each herb, and spreads out ev’ry flow’r!
- “ Annual, for *me*, the grape, the rose, renew
- “ The juice nectarious, and the balmy dew;
- “ For *me*, the mine a thousand treasures brings;
- “ For *me*, health gushes from a thousand springs.”

Eth. Ep. I. ver. 129.

the scorching beams of summer. May we not also regard them, as the great watering-pots of the globe? which, wafted on the wings of the wind, dispense their moisture evenly through the universal garden; * and fructify, with their showers, whatever our hand plants.—The *fields* are our exhaustless granary.—The *ocean* is our vast reservoir.—The *animals* spend their strength, to dispatch our business; resign their cloathing, to replenish our wardrobe; and surrender their very lives, to provide for our tables. In short every *element* is a storehouse of conveniencies; every *season* brings us the choicest productions: all *nature* is our caterer.—And, which is a most endearing recommendation of these favours, they are all as lovely, as they are useful. You observe nothing mean or inelegant. All is clad in *Beauty's* fairest robe, † and regulated by *Proportion's* nicest rule. The whole scene exhibits a fund of pleasures to the

* This circumstance, amidst abundance of other delicate and edifying remarks upon the wonders of nature, is finely touched in the *philosophical transactions* recorded in the book of Job, chap. xxxviii. ver. 15.—מִי פָרַק לַעֲטֹף הָעֵלֶה “Who hath divided a water-course “for the overflowing of waters?”—The Hebrew is so pregnant and rich with sense, that no *translation* can do it justice. The following *para. frase*, perhaps, may represent the principal ideas comprehended in the expressive original.—Who has branched out, and with admirable judgment, disposed a variety of *aqueducts*, for that immense collection of waters which float in the sky? who distributes those pendulous floods through all the borders of the earth? distributes them, not in dreadful cataracts, or promiscuous gluts of rain; but in kindly drops, and refreshing showers: with as much *regularity* and *seasoning*, as if they were conveyed by *pipes* from a *conduit*?—TO WHOM shall we ascribe that niceness of contrivance, which now emits, now restrains them; sometimes drives their humid rain to one place sometimes to another: dispenses them to *this* soil in larger, to *that* in smaller communications; and in a word, so manages the mighty fluid, that every spot is supplied in exact proportion to its wants; none destroyed, by an undistinguishing deluge?

† Perhaps it was from such an observation, that the Greeks, those critical and refined judges of things, expressed the *mundane system* by a word which signifies *beauty*; ———κοσμος.

the imagination, at the same time that it more than supplies all our wants. *

Therefore thou art *inexcusable*, O man, whofoever thou art that *rebellest* against thy Maker. He furrounds thee, with unnumbered benefits; and follows thee, with an effusion of the richest, noblest gifts. He courts thy affections; he solicits thy gratitude; by liberalities which are never intermitted, by a bounty which knows no limits.—Most bleſſed LORD, let this thy goodneſs, thy unwearied goodneſs lead us to repentance. *Win* us to thyſelf, thou fountain of felicity, by theſe ſweet inducements. *Draw* us to our duty, thou GOD of our ſalvation, by theſe “ cords of love.”

What a living picture is here, of the *beneficial* effects of *industry*! By *industry* and cultivation, this neat ſpot is an image of *Eden*. Here, is all that can entertain the eye, or regale the ſmell. † Whereas, without cultivation, this ſweet garden had been a deſolate wilderneſs. Vile thistles had made it loathſome, and tangling briars inacceſſible. Without cultivation, it might have been a neſt for ſerpents, and the horrid haunt of venomous creatures. But the ſpade and pruning knife in the hand of *industry*, have improved it into a ſort of *terreſtrial* paradise.

How naturally does this lead our contemplation, to the advantages which flow from a virtuous *education*, and the miſeries which enſue from the *neglect*

* “ Thoſe ſeveral living creatures, which are made for our ſervice or ſuſtenance, at the ſame time either fill the woods with their muſic, furniſh us with game, or raiſe pleaſing ideas in us by the delightſulneſs of their appearance. Fountains, lakes, and rivers, are as reſreſhing to the imagination as to the ſoil through which they paſs.” *SpecT.* Vol. v. No. 387.

† *Omnis copia narium.*

Hor.

————— And greets
The ſenſes with a waſte of ſweets.

gleet of it! *—The mind, without early instruction, will, in all probability, become like the “vine-yard of the sluggard.” If left to the propensities of its own depraved will; what can we expect, but the most luxuriant growth of unruly appetites; which, in time, will break forth into all manner of scandalous irregularities? What?—but that *anger*, like a prickly thorn, arm the temper with an untractable moroseness: *peevishness*, like a stinging nettle, render the conversation irksome and forbidding: *avarice*, like some choaking weed, teach the fingers to gripe, and the hands to oppress; *revenge*, like some poisonous plant, replete with baneful juices, rankle in the breast, and meditate mischief to its neighbour; while unbridled *lusts*, like swarms of noisome insects, taint each rising thought; and render “every imagination of the heart, only evil continually.”—Such are the usual products of savage nature! such the furniture of the uncultivated soul!

Whereas, let the mind be put under the “nurture and admonition of the LORD:” let holy discipline clear the soil: let sacred instructions sow it with the best seed: let skill and vigilance dress the rising shoots; direct the young ideas, how to spread; the wayward passions, how to move.—Then, what a different state of the inner man will quickly take place! *charity* will breathe her sweets, and *hope* expand her blossoms; the *personal* virtues display their graces, and the *social* ones their fruits: † the sentiments become generous; the carriage

* *Neglectis urenda filix innascitur agris.*

Hor.

— — — — — For an uncultur'd field
Shall for the fire its thorns and thistles yield.

† This transformation of the *heart*, and renewal of the *life*, are represented in scripture by similitudes very nearly allied to the images used above.—GOD, by his sanctifying Spirit, “will make “the soul as a watered garden.” Under the operation of this divine

carriage endearing; the life honourable and useful. *

O! that governors of *families*, and masters of *schools*, would watch, with a conscientious solicitude, over the morals of the tender charge! What pity it is, that the advancing generation should lose these invaluable endowments, through any supineness in their instructors!——See! with what assiduity the *curious florist* attends his little nursery! he visits them early and late; furnishes them with the properest mold; supplies them with seasonable moisture; guards them from the ravages of insects; screens them from the injuries of the weather; marks their springing buds; observes them attentively, through their whole progress; and never intermits his anxiety, till he beholds them blown into full perfection.——And shall a range of *painted leaves*, which flourish to-day, and to-morrow fall to the ground:—shall these be tended, with more zealous application, than the exalted faculties of an *immortal* soul!

Yet trust not in cultivation *alone*. It is the blessing of the almighty Husbandman, which imparts *success* to such labours of love. If GOD “seal up
“the bottles of heaven,” and command the clouds
to withhold their fatness, the best manured plot
becomes

vine principle, “the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.” Wherever it exerts the refining and ennobling energy, “instead of
“the thorn shall come up the fir-tree; and, instead of the brier,
“the myrtle-tree.” Jer. xxxi. 12. Isa. xxxv. 1. lv. 13.

* ——— *A teneris affuscere tanti est!*

Virg.

Ου γαρ μικρον διαφερει, το ελω; η ελω; ευδus εκ νεων επιζισσαι,
αλλα παμπλου, μαλλον δε το παν. Αριστοτ.

“The principles we imbibe, and the habits we contract, in our
“early years, are not matters of *small moment*, but of the *utmost*
“*consequence* imaginable. They not only give a transient or super-
“ficial tincture, to our *first* appearance in life; but most common-
“ly stamp the form of our *whole* future conduct, and even of our
“*eternal* state.”

becomes a barren desert. And if He restrain the dew of his heavenly benediction, all human endeavours miscarry; the rational plantation languishes; our most pregnant hopes, from youths of the most promising genius, prove abortive. "Their root" will be as rottenness, and their blossom will go "up as dust." *—Therefore, let *parents* plant; let *tutors* water; but let both look up to the Father of *spirits*, for the desired increase.

On every side, I espy several *budding* flowers, As yet, they are like bales of cloth from the packer's warehouse. Each is wrapt within a strong inclosure, and its contents are tied together by the firmest bandages. So that all their beauties lie concealed, and all their sweets are locked up.—Just such is the *niggardly* wretch; whose aims are all turned inward, and meanly terminated upon *himself*; who makes his own private interests, or personal pleasures, the sole centre of his designs, and the scanty circumference of his actions.

Ere long, the searching beams will open these silken folds, and draw them into a graceful *expansion*. Then, what a lovely blush will glow in their cheeks; and what a balmy odour exhale from their bosoms!—So when divine grace shines upon the mind, even "the churl becomes bountiful." The heart of stone is taken away; and a heart of flesh, a heart susceptible of the softest, most compassionate emotions, is introduced in its stead. O! how sweetly do the social affections dilate themselves, under so benign an influence! just like these disclosing gems, under the powerful eye of day. The tender regards are no longer *confined* to a single object; but *extend* themselves into a generous concern
for

* Isaiah v. 24.

for mankind, and shed liberal refreshments on all within their reach. *

Arise then, thou Sun of righteousness; arise, with healing under thy wings; and transfuse thy gentle but penetrating ray, through all our intellectual powers. Enlarge every *narrow* disposition, and fill us with a *diffusive* benevolence. Make room in our breasts, for the whole human race; and teach us to love all our fellow-creatures, for their amiable Creator's sake. May we be pleased with their excellencies, and rejoice in their happiness; but feel their miseries as our own, and with a brother's sympathy, hasten to relieve them.

Disposed at proper distances, I observe a range of strong and *stately stalks*. They stand like towers, along the walls of a fortified city; or rise like lofty spires, amidst the group of houses. They part at the top, into several pensile spicy pods. From each of which, we shall soon see a fine figure displaying itself: *rounded* into a form, which constitutes a perfect circle; *spread* wide open into the most frank and communicative air; and tinged with the colour, which is so peculiarly captivating to the miser's eye.

But the property I chiefly admire, is its passionate *fondness* for the *sun*. When the evening shades take place, the poor flower droops, and folds up its
its

* The prophet, describing the *charitable* temper, very beautifully says; "If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry!"——This, I think, may not improperly be illustrated by the circumstances observed above. The opening of these buds into a large and extensive spread, is a pretty portrait of the *amplitude* of a *generous* heart; which cannot shut up its compassion, or remain unconcerned at any human calamity. The freeness and copiousness with which the expanded flowers are continually pouring out their choicest essences, may represent the various acts of an unwearied liberality; together with those endearing words, and that cordial affection, which *embalm*, as it were, a gift; double its value; and constitute what the sacred penman styles, "drawing out the soul." חֲרִיק נֶפֶשׁ *De-promptis animam tuam*. Isa. lviii. 10.

its leaves. It mourns all the long night, and pines amidst the gloom, like some forlorn lover, banished from the object of his affections. No sooner does Providence open "the eyelids of the morning," but it meets and welcomes the returning light; * courts and caresses it, all the day; nor ever loses sight of the refulgent charmer so long as he continues above the horizon!—In the morning, you may perceive it, presenting a golden bosom to the east; at noon, it points upward, to the middle sky; in the evening, follows the same attractive influence to the west.

Surely, nature is a book, and every page rich with sacred hints. To an attentive mind, the garden turns preacher; and its blooming tenants, are so many lively sermons. What an engaging pattern, and what an excellent lesson, have we here!—So, let the redeemed of the LORD look unto JESUS, † and be conformed to their beloved. Let us all be *Heliotropes* (if I may use the expression) to the Sun of righteousness. Let our passions rise and fall; take this course or that; as his word determines, as his holy example guides. Let us be so accommodated, both to his commanding and providential will, as the wax is turned to the imprinted seal; or, as the aspect of this enamoured flower, to the splendid star, which creates our day.

In every enjoyment, O thou watchful Christian, look unto JESUS; receive it as proceeding from his love, and purchased by his agonies. ‡——In every

* ——— *Ille suum, quamvis radice tenetur,
Vertitur ad solem.*

Ovid.

Still the lov'd object the fond leaves pursue,
Still move their root, the moving sun to view.

† Heb. xii. 2.

‡ He sunk beneath our heavy woes,
To raise us to his throne:
There's not a gift his hand bestows,
But cost his heart a groan.

Watts.

every *tribulation* look unto JESUS; mark his gracious hand, managing the scourge, or mingling the bitter cup; attempering it to a proper degree of severity; adjusting the time of its continuance; and ready to make these seeming disasters, productive of real good.—In every infirmity and *failing*, look unto JESUS, thy merciful High Priest; pleading his atoning blood, and making intercession for transgressors.—In every *prayer* look unto JESUS, thy prevailing advocate; recommending thy devotions, and “bearing the iniquity of thy holy things.”*—In every *temptation* look unto JESUS, the author of thy strength, and captain of thy salvation; who alone is able to lift up the hands which hang down, to invigorate the enfeebled knees, and make thee more than conqueror over all thy enemies.—But especially, when the *hour* of thy *departure* approaches; when “thy flesh and thy heart fail;” when all the springs of life are irreparably breaking; *then*, look unto JESUS with a believing eye. † Like expiring *Stephen*, behold him standing at the right hand of GOD, on purpose to succour his people, in this their last extremity. Yes, my Christian friend; when thy journey thro’ life is finished, and thou art arrived on the very verge of mortality; when thou art just launching out into the invisible world, and all before thee is vast eternity; then, O then, be sure to look steadfastly unto JESUS! “See by faith the LORD’s “CHRIST.” View him, as the only *way*, ‡ to the everlasting mansions; as the only *door*, § to the abodes of bliss.

Yonder

* Exod. xxviii. 38.

† “Look unto ME, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.”
Isa. xiv. 22.

‡ John xiv. 6.

§ John x. 9.

Yonder tree, which faces the south, has something too remarkable, to pass without observation. — Like the fruitful, though feeble vine, she brings forth a large family of branches: but, unable to support them herself, commits them to the tuition of a sunny wall. As yet the tender twigs have scarce gemmed their future blossoms. However, I may anticipate the well known productions, and picture to myself the *passion flower*; which will in due time, with a long and copious succession, adorn the boughs.

I have read in a *Latin* author, of flowers inscribed with the names of Kings;* but here is one, imblazoned with the marks of the bleeding Prince of life. I read in the inspired writings, of apostolic men, who bore about in their bodies, the dying of the LORD JESUS:† but here is a *blooming religio*, that carries apparent memorials of the same tremendous and fatal catastrophe. — Who would have expected to find such a tragedy of woe, exhibited in a collection of the most delicate delights? or, to see *Calvary's* horrid scene pourtrayed on the softest ornaments of the garden? — Is nature then actuated by the noble ambition, of paying *commemorative* honours to her agonizing Sovereign? Is she kindly officious to *re-mind* forgetful mortals, of that miracle of mercy; which it is their duty to contemplate, and their happiness to believe? — Or is a *sportive* imagination my interpreter; and all the supposed resemblance, no more than the precarious gloss of fancy? Be it so: yet even fancy has her merit, when she sets forth in such pleasing imagery, the crucified JESUS

* *Dic, quibus in terris inscripti nomina regum
Nascantur flores?*

Virg.

Now tell in what new region springs
A flow'r that bears inscrib'd the name of kings.

† 2 Cor. iv. 10.

SUS. Nor shall I refuse a willing regard, to imagination herself; when she employs her creative powers, to revive the sense of such unparalleled love, and prompt my gratitude to so divine a friend.

That *spiral tendril*, arising from the bottom of the stalk; is it a representation of the *scourge*, which lashed the Redeemer's unspotted flesh; and inflicted those stripes, by which our souls are healed? Or is it twisted for the *cord*, which bound his hands in painful and ignominious confinement; those beneficent hands, which were incessantly stretched out to unloose the heavy burdens, and to impart blessings of every choice kind?—Behold the *nails*, which were drenched in his sacred veins, and riveted his feet to the accursed tree: those beautiful feet,* which always went about doing good; and travelled far and near, to spread the glad tidings of everlasting salvation.—See the *hammer*, ponderous and massy, which drove the rugged irons through the shivering nerves; and forced a passage for those dreadful wedges, between the dislocated bones.—View the *thorns*, which encircled our royal Master's brow, and shot their keen afflictive points into his blessed head. O the smart, the racking smart! when, instead of the triumphal laurel, or the odoriferous garland, that pungent and ragged wreath, was planted on the meek Messiah's forehead! when violent and barbarous blows of the strong eastern cane,† struck the prickly crown, and

* “How beautiful are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation!” Isa. liii. 7.

† “They took the reed,” says the sacred historian, “and smote him on the head;” and so as it were, nailed down the thorns into his forehead and temples, and occasioned thereby exquisite pain, as well as great effusion of blood.’ *Family Expositor*, vol. ii. sect. 188.—“It is most probable,” adds the same judicious critic, “this was a walking-staff, which they put into his hand as a sceptre; for a *blow* with a *slight reed* would scarce have been felt, or have deserved a mention in a detail of such dreadful sufferings.”

and fixed every thorn deep in his throbbing temples! *—There stand the *disciples*, ranged in the green impalement; and forming a circle, round the instruments of their great Commander's death. They appear like so many faithful adherents, who breathe a gallant resolution, either of defending their LORD to the last extremity, or of dropping honourably by his side. But did they give such proofs of zeal and fidelity in their conduct, as their steady posture, and determined aspect, seem to promise? Alas; what is all human firmness, when destitute of succours from above, but an expiring *vapour*? what is every saint, if unsupported by powerful grace, but an abandoned *traitor*?—Observe the *glory*, delineated in double rays, grand with imperial purple, and rich with ætherial blue. But ah! how incapable are threads, though spun by summer's finest hand; though dyed in snows, or dipped in heaven! to display the immaculate excellency of his human, or the ineffable majesty of his divine nature! Compared with these sublime perfections, the most *vivid* assemblage of colours, fades in an unmeaning flatness; the most charming effects of light and shade, are not only mere daubings, but an absolute blank.

Among all the beauties, which shine in sunny robes, and sip the silver dews; this I think, has the *noblest import*, if not the *finest presence*. Were they all to pass in review, and expect the award of superiority from my decision; I should not hesitate

2

* The smart attending this unparalleled piece of contempt and barbarity, must be *inexpressibly severe*: not only on account of the many painful punctures made in the flesh; but principally, because the *periosteum*, an exquisitely sensible tegument of the bones, lying in those parts, very near the external skin, must receive a *multitude* of terrible wounds. The anguish of which could not fail of being inflamed to an excess of rage, by the *continuance* of so many thorny lancets in that extremely tender membrane, which in such a case,

—Tremblingly alive all o'er,
Must smart and agonize at every pore.

a moment. Be the prize assigned to this amiable candidate; which has so eminently distinguished, and so highly dignified herself by bearing such a remarkable resemblance to “the righteous branch; “the plant of renown.”* While others appoint it a place in the parterre; I would transplant the passion flower, or rather transfer its sacred significance, to my heart. *There* let it bloom, both in summer and in winter; bloom, in the most impressive characters, and with an undecaying lustre: that I also may wear—wear on my very soul, the traces of IMMANUEL; pierced for my sins, and bruised for my transgressions: that I also may *be crucified with* CHRIST; † at least in penitential remorse, and affectionate sympathy. That I may “know the fellowship of his sufferings;” ‡ and feel all my evil affections, wounded by his agonies, mortified by his death.

There is another subject of the verdant kingdom, which, on account of its very uncommon qualities, demands my particular notice. One so extremely diffident in her disposition, and delicate in her constitution; that she dares not venture herself abroad in the open air, but is nursed up in the warmth of a *hot-bed*, and lives cloistered in the cells of a *green-house*. But the most curious peculiarity is, that, of all her kindred species, she alone partakes of *perceptive* life; at least advances nearest to this more exalted state of being; and may be looked upon as the link, which connects the animal and vegetable world. A stranger, observing her motions, would almost be induced to suspect, that she is endued with some inferior degrees of consciousness and caution. For if you offer to handle this *sensitive plant*, she immediately takes an alarm; hastily contracts

* So the blessed JESUS is described, Jer. xxiii. 5. Ezek. xxxiv. 29.

† Gal. ii. 20.

‡ Phil. iii. 10.

contracts her fibres; and, like a person under apprehensions of violence, *withdraws* from your finger, in a kind of precipitate *disorder*. Perhaps, the beauty of her aspect might be sullied, or the niceness of her texture discomposed, by the human touch. Therefore like a coy virgin, she recedes from all unbecoming familiarities; and will admit no such improper, if not pernicious freedoms.

Whatever be the cause of this unusual effect, it suggests an instructive admonition to the Christian. *Such* should be our apprehensive timorous care, with regard to sin; and all, even the most distant, approaches of vice. *So* should we avoid the very appearance of evil, and stand aloof from every occasion of falling.—If sinners entice; if forbidden pleasures tempt; or if opportunity beckon, with the gain of injustice in her hand: O! turn from the gilded snare, touch not the beauteous bane; but fly, fly, with haste, fly without any delay, from the bewitching ruin.——Does *anger* draw near with her lighted torch, to kindle the flame of resentment in our breasts? Does *Flattery* ply our ears, with her enchanting and intoxicating whispers? would *Discontent* lay her leaden hand upon our temper, and mould into our minds her sour leaven; in order to make us a burden to ourselves, and unamiable to others? instantly let us divert our attention from the dangerous objects; and not so much endeavour to *antidote*, as to *shun*, the moral contagion. Let us revolve in our meditations, that wonderful meekness of our distressed Master; which amidst the most abusive and provoking insults, maintained an uniform tenour of unshaken serenity. Let us contemplate that prodigious *humiliation*, which brought him, from an infinite height above all worlds, to make his bed in the dust of death. Let us sooth our jarring, our uneasy passions, with the remembrance of that *cheerfulness* and *resignation*; which rendered him, in

the deepest poverty, unfeignedly thankful; and under the heaviest tribulations, most submissively patient.

Harbour not, on any consideration, the betrayer of your virtue. Be deaf, inflexibly deaf, to every beguiling solicitation. If it obtrude into the unguarded heart, give it entertainment, no, not for a moment. To parley with the enemy, is to open a door for destruction. Our safety consists in flight: and in this case, *suspicion* is the truest *prudence*; *fear* the greatest *bravery*.—Play not on the brink of the precipice. Flutter not round the edges of the flame. Dally not with the stings of death. But reject, with a becoming mixture of solicitude, and abhorrence, the very first insinuations of iniquity: as cautiously, as the *smarting sore* shrinks even from the softest hand; as constantly, as this *jealous plant* recoils at the approaching touch.*

Not long ago, these curious productions of the spring, were *coarse* and misshapen *roots*. Had we opened the earth, and beheld them in their seed,
how

* The prophet Isaiah, in an elegant and lively description of the *upright man*, says, “He shaketh his hands from holding of bribes;” and, I may add, from practising any kind of iniquity. The image, exceedingly beautiful, and equally expressive, both illustrates and enforces the doctrine of this whole section.—“Shaketh his hands; just as a person would do, who happens to have *burning coals* fall into his lap, or some *venomous creature* fastening upon his flesh. In such a case, none would stand a moment to consider, or to debate with himself the expediency of the thing. He would instantly fling off the pernicious incumbrance; instantly endeavour to disengage himself from the clinging mischief.—Isa. xxxiii. 15.

I have represented the danger of not extinguishing immediately the *very first* sparks of temptation, in a variety of views. Because a proper behaviour, in this conjuncture, is of such vast importance to the purity, the safety, and the comfort of our minds.—Because I had the *royal moralist* in my eye; who, deterring his pupils from the path of the wicked, cries; with an air of deep concern, and in the language of vehement importunity, cries; “Avoid it, pass not “by it; turn from it, and pass away.” How strongly is the counsel urged, by being so frequently repeated; in such a remarkable *diversity* of concise and abrupt, consequently of forcible and pressing admonitions! Prov. iv. 16.

how uncouth and contemptible had their appearance been!—But now they are the boast of nature; the delight of the sons of men; finished patterns for enamelling and embroidery; outshining even the happiest strokes of the pencil. They are taught to bloom, but with a very inferior lustre,* in the richest tapestries, and most magnificent silks. Art never attempts to *equal* their incomparable elegancies; but places all her merit, in copying after these delicate originals. Even those who glitter in silver, or whose cloathing is of wrought gold, are desirous to borrow additional ornaments, from a sprig of jessamine, or a little assemblage of pinks.

What a fine idea may we form, from hence, of the *resurrection* of the *just*, and the state of their reanimated bodies! As the roots even of our choicest flowers, when deposited in the ground, are rude and ungraceful; but, when they spring up into blooming life, are most elegant and splendid: so, the flesh of a saint, when committed to the dust, alas! what is it? A heap of corruption; a mass of putrefying clay. But, when it obeys the great Archangel's call, and starts into a new existence, what an astonishing change ensues! what a most ennobling improvement takes place!—That which was sown in *weakness*, is raised in all the vivacity of *power*. That which was sown in *deformity*, is raised in the bloom of celestial *beauty*. Exalted, refined, and glorified, it will shine “as the brightness of the firmament,” when it darts the inimitable blue, through the fleeces—the snowy fleeces of some cleaving cloud.

Fear not, then thou faithful Christian; fear not, at the appointed time, to descend into the tomb.

* The cowslip smiles, in *brighter yellow* dress
Than that which veils the nubil virgin's breast:
A *fairer red* stands blushing in the rose
Than that which on the bridegroom's vestments flows.

Prior's Sol.

tomb. Thy *soul* thou mayst trust with thy omnipotent Redeemer, who is LORD of the unseen world; "Who has the keys of hell, and of death." Most safely mayst thou trust thy better part, in those beneficent hands, which were pierced with nails, and fastened to the ignominious tree, for thy salvation.—With regard to thy *earthly tabernacle*, be not dismayed. It is taken down, only to be rebuilt upon a diviner plan, and in a more heavenly form. If it retires into the shadow of death, and lies immured in the gloom of the grave; it is only to return, from a short confinement, to endless liberty. If it falls into dissolution, it is in order to rise more illustrious from its ruins; and wear an infinitely brighter face of perfection, and of glory.

HAVING, now, made my *panegyric*; let me, next, take up a *lamentation*, for these loveliest productions of the vegetable world.—For I foresee their approaching doom. Yet a little while, and all these pleasing scenes vanish. Yet a little while, and all the sweets of the breathing, all the beauties of the blooming spring, are no more. Every one of these amiable forms, must be shrivelled to deformity, and trodden to the earth.—Significant resemblance this, of all created beauty. *All flesh is grass*; like the green herbage, liable and prone to fade. Nay, *all the goodliness thereof*, its finest accomplishments and what the world universally admires, "is as the flower of the field;"* which loses its gloss, decays and perishes, more speedily than the grass itself.—Behold then, ye brightest among the daughters of *Eve*; behold yourselves, in this glass. See the charms of your *person* eclipsed, by the lustre of these little flowers; and the frailty

* *Isaiah xl. 6.*

frailty of your *state* represented,* by their transient glories. A fever may scorch those polished veins; a consumption may emaciate the dimpling cheeks; and a load of unexpected sorrows depress those lively spirits. Or should these disasters, in pity, spare the tender frame; yet age, inexorable age and wrinkles, will assuredly come at last! will wither all the fine features, and blast every sprightly grace.

Then

* Και το ρόδον καλον εστι, και ο χρονος αυτο μαραινει·
 Και το ιον καλον εστι εν ειασι, και ταχυ γηραι·
 Λευκον το κρινον εστι, μαραινεται ανικα πιπτη·
 Α δε χιον λευκα, και τακται ανικα παχθη·
 Και καλλος καλον εστι το παιδικον αλλ' ελιγον ζη.

The reader will excuse me, if I *imitate*, rather than *translate*, these lines from Theocritus; if I vary one image, add another, and give a new turn to the whole.

When snows descend, and robe the fields
 In winter's bright array;
 Touch'd by the sun, the lustre fades,
 And weeps itself away.

When spring appears, when violets blow,
 And shed a rich perfume;
 How soon the fragrance breathes its last!
 How short-liv'd is the bloom!

Fresh in the morn, the summer rose
 Hangs withering ere 'tis noon:
 We scarce enjoy the balmy gift,
 But mourn the pleasure gone.

With gliding fire, an evening star
 Streaks the autumnal skies;
 Shook from the sphere, it darts away,
 And in an instant dies.

Such are the charms that flush the cheek,
 And sparkle in the eye:
 So from the lovely finish'd form
 The transient graces fly.

To this the seasons, as they roll,
 Their attestation bring;
 They warn the fair: their ev'ry round
 Confirms the truth I sing.

Then, ye *fair*, when those sparkling eyes are darkened, and sink in their orbs ; when they are rolling in agonies, or swimming in death ; how will you sustain the affliction ? how will you repair the loss !——Apply your thoughts to *religion*. Attend to the *one thing needful*. Believe in, and imitate the blessed JESUS. Then shall your souls mount up to the realms of happiness ; when the well proportioned clay, is mingled with its mean original. The light of GOD's countenance will irradiate, with matchless and consummate perfection, all their exalted faculties. Cleansed entirely from every dreg of corruption, like some unsullied mirror, they will reflect the complete image of their Creator's holiness.——O ! that you would thus *dress* your *minds*, and prepare for the immortal state ! Then, from shining among your fellow-creatures on earth, you shall be translated, to shine around the throne of GOD. Then, from being the sweeteners of our life, and the delight of our eyes, here below ; you shall pass, by an easy transition, into angels of light ; and become “ an everlasting excellency, the joy of all generations.”

“ Yes ; ye flowery nations, ye must all decay.” —Yonder *lily*, that looks like the queen of the gay creation—see, how gracefully it erects its majestic head ! What an air of dignity and grandeur ennobles its aspect. For elevated mien, as well as for incomparable lustre, justly may it be preferred to the magnificent monarch of the East.* But, all stately and charming as it is, it will hardly survive a few more days. That unspotted whiteness must quickly be tarnished ; and the snowy form defiled in the dust.

As the *lily* pleases with the noble simplicity of its appearance ; the *tulip* is admired for the gaiety
and

* Matth. vi. 29.

and multiplicity of its colours. Never was cup either painted, or enamelled, with such a profusion of dyes. Its tinges are so glowing; its contrasts so strong: and the arrangement of them both so elegant and artful!—It was lately the pride of the border, and the reigning beauty of the delightful season; as exquisitely fine as the rainbow, and almost as extremely transient. It spread, for a little moment, its glittering plumage; but has, now, laid all its variegated and superior honours down. Those radiant stripes are blended, alas! rudely blended with common mold.

To a graceful shape, and blooming complexion, the *rose* adds the most agreeable perfume. Our nostrils make it repeated visits, and are never weary of drinking in its sweets. A fragrance, so peculiarly rich and reviving, transpires from its opening tufts, that every one covets it acquaintance. How have I seen even the accomplished *Clarissa*, for whom so many votaries languish, fondly caressing this little flower? That lovely bosom, which is the seat of innocence and virtue; whose least excellency it is, to rival the delicacy of the purest snows; among a thousand charms of its own, thinks it possible to adopt another from the damask rose bud. —Yet, even this universal favourite must fail. Its native balm cannot preserve it from putrefaction. Soon, soon, must it resign all those endearing qualities; and hang neglected on its stem, or drop despised to the ground.

One could wish, methinks, these most amiable of the inanimate race, a longer existence: but in vain. They *fade*, almost as soon as they *flourish*. Within less than a month, their glories are extinct. Let the sun take a few more journeys through the sky; then visit this enchanting walk; and you will find nothing, but a wretched wilderness of ragged or naked stalks.

—But

—But (my soul exults in the thought) the *garment* of celestial *glory*, which shall ere long array the re-animated body, will never wax old. The illustrious *robes* of a Saviour's consummate *righteousness*, which even now adorn the justified spirit, are incorruptible and immortal. No moth can corrode their texture ; no number of ages fully their brightness. The light of day may be quenched, and all the stars sink in obscurity ; but the honours of "just men made perfect" are subject to no diminution. Inextinguishable and unfading is the lustre of their crown.

"Yes ; ye flowery nations, ye must all decay." —Winter, like some enraged and irresistible conqueror, that carries fire and sword wherever he advances ; that demolishes towns, depopulates countries, spreads slaughter and desolation on every side ;—so, just so, will *winter*, with his savage and unrelenting blasts, invade this beautiful prospect. The storms are gathering, and the tempests mustering their rage, to fall upon the vegetable kingdoms. They will ravage through the dominions of nature, and plunder her *riches*, and lay waste her *charms*.—Then, ye trees, must ye stand stript of your verdant apparel ; and ye fields, be spoiled of your waving treasures. Then the earth, disrobed of all her gay attire, must sit in sables, like a disconsolate widow. The sun too, who now rides in triumph round the world, and scatters gaiety from his radiant eye, will then look faintly from the windows of the south ; and, casting a short glance on our dejected world, will leave us to the uncomfortable gloom of tedious nights. Then, these pretty *choristers* of the *air* will chant no more to the gentle gales. The lark, the linnet, and all the feathered songsters, abandon their notes, and indulge their woes. The harmony of the woods is at an end ! and silence, (unless it be interrupted by howling winds,)

winds), a fullen silence, sits brooding upon the boughs which are now made vocal by a thousand warbling throats.

But, (sweet recollection ; ravishing expectation !) the *songs of saints* in light never admit a pause for sadness. All heaven will resound with the melody of their gratitude ; and all eternity echo to their triumphant acclamations. The *hallelujahs* of that world, and the harmonious joy of its inhabitants, will be as lasting as the divine perfections they celebrate.—Come, then, holy love, and *tune my heart* ; descend, celestial fire, and *touch my tongue* ; that I may stand ready to strike up, and bear my part in that great hosanna, that everlasting hymn.

“ Yes, yes ; ye flow’ry nations, ye must all decay.”—And indeed, could you add the strength of an oak, or the stability of a pyramid, * to all the delicacy of your texture ; yet short, exceeding short, even then, would your duration be. For, “ I see, that all things come to an end.” The pillars of nature are tottering. The foundations of the round world are falling away. “ The heavens themselves wax old like a garment.”——But, amidst

* I know not any performance, in which the *transitory* nature of these most *durable* monuments of human grandeur, is hinted with such a modest air of instruction ; or their hedious ruin described in such a pomp of pleasing horror ; as in a small, but solemn, picturesque and majestic poem, entitled,—*The Ruins of Rome*, written by the Rev. Mr. DYER. Whom the reader, (if he has the pleasure of perusing that beautiful piece) will easily perceive, to have taken his draughts from the *originals* themselves ; as nothing but the *sight* of those magnificent remains could have inspired his lines with such vivacity.—As a specimen of the work, and a confirmation of the remark suggested above, I take leave to transcribe the following passage :

———“ The pilgrim oft,
“ At dead of night, ’mid his oraison, hears
“ Aghast the voice of time, disparting tow’rs
“ Tumbling, all precipitate down dash’d
“ Rattling around, loud thund’ring to the moon.”

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amidst these views of general ruin, here is our refuge; this is our consolation: "We know, that our Redeemer liveth." Thy years, blessed JESUS, shall not fail. From everlasting to everlasting, thou art still the same: the same most excellent and adorable person; the same omnipotent and faithful friend; the same all-sufficient and inestimable portion. O! may we but partake of thy merits; be sanctified by thy grace; and received into thy glory!—Then perish, if ye will, all inferior delights. Let all that is *splendid* in the skies expire; and all that is *amiable* in nature, be expunged. Let the whole extent of creation be turned again into one undistinguishable void, one universal blank.—Yet, if GOD be ours, we shall have *enough*. If GOD be ours, we shall have *all*, and abound; * all that our circumstances can want, or our wishes crave, to make us inconceivably blessed and happy; blessed and happy, not only through this little interval of time, but through the unmeasurable revolutions of eternity.

The *sun* is now come forth in his strength: and beats fiercely upon my throbbing pulse.—Let me retire to yonder inviting *arbor*. There, the wood-bines retain the lucid drop; there, the jessamines, which line the verdant alcove, are still impearled, and deliciously wet with dews.—Welcome, ye *refreshing shades*! I feel, I feel, your cheering influence. My languid spirits revive; the slackened sinews are new-strung; and life bounds brisker, through all her crimson channels.

Reclined on this mossy couch, and surrounded by this fragrant coldness, let me renew my aspirations to the ever present Deity. Here, let me remember,

* His hand the good man fastens on the skies,
And bids earth roll, nor feels the idle whirl.

member, and imitate, the pious Augustine, and his mother Monica : who, being engaged in discourse on the beauties of the visible creation, rose, by these ladders, to the glories of the invisible state, till they were inspired with the most *affecting sense* of their supereminent excellency ; and actuated with the most *ardent breathings* after their full enjoyment. Inſomuch, that they were almoſt rapt up into the bliſs they contemplated ; and ſcarce “ knew, whether they were in the body, or out “ of the body.”

When *tempeſts* toſs the ocean ; when plaintive ſignals of diſtreſs are heard from the bellowing deep, and melancholy tokens of ſhipwreck come floating on the foaming ſurge ; then, how delightful to ſtand ſafe on ſhore, and hug one’s ſelf in conſcious ſecurity ! *——When a *glut* of *waters* burſts from ſome mighty torrent, ruſhes headlong over all the neighbouring plains, ſweeps away the helpless cattle, and drives the affrighted ſhepherd from his hut ; then, from the top of a diſtant eminence, to deſcry the danger we need not fear, how pleaſing !——Such, methinks, is my *preſent ſituation*. For, now, the ſun blazes from on high ; the air glows with his fire ; the fields are rent with chinks ; the roads are ſcorched to duſt ; the woods ſeem to contract a ſickly aſpect, and a ruſſet hue ; the traveller, broiled as he rides, haſtens to his inn, and intermits his journey : the labourer, bathed in ſweat, drops the ſcythe, and deſiſts from his work ; the cattle flee to ſome ſhady covert, or elſe pant and

* As Lucretius gave the hint for theſe obſervations, ſo he aſſigns the reaſon of the pleaſure ſpecified. It ariſes, not from the conſideration of *another’s miſery* ; this would argue the rankeſt malevolence : but from the agreeable contemplation of our *own perſonal ſafety*. Which, while we view circumſtances that are pernicious to others, but harmleſs to ourſelves, is not a little heightened by the conſtraiſt. *Suave mari magno, &c.*

and tofs under the burning noon. 'Even the stubborn rock, smit with the piercing beams, is ready to cleave. All things *languish* beneath the dazzling deluge—while I shall enjoy a *cool* hour, and *calm* reflection, amidst the gloom of this bowery recess, which scarce admits one speck of sunshine.

Thus, may both the flock and their shepherd, "dwell beneath the defence of the Most High, "and abide under the shadow of the Almighty." * Then, though the *pestilence* † walketh in darkness, and the sickness destroyeth at noon-day; though thousands fall beside us, and ten thousands at our right hand; we need fear no evil. Either the destroying angel shall pass over our houses; or else, he shall dispense the corrections of a friend, not the scourges of an enemy; which, instead of hurting us, shall work for our good.—Then, though *profaneness* and *infidelity*, far more malignant evils, breathe deadly contagion, and taint the morals of multitudes around us; yet if the great Father of spirits "hide us under the hollow of his hand," we shall hold fast our integrity, and be faithful unto death.

Let then, dearest LORD, O! let thy servant, and the people committed to his care, be received into thy protection. Let us take sanctuary under that *tree of life*, erected in thy ignominious cross. Let us fly for safety to that *city of refuge*, opened in thy bleeding wounds. These shall be a sacred hiding place, not to be pierced by the flames of divine wrath, or the fiery darts of temptation. Thy dying merits, and perfect obedience, shall be to our souls "as rivers of water in a dry place, *or* as the "shadow of a great rock in a weary land." ‡

* Psal. xci. 1.

† This was written, when a very infectious and mortal distemper raged in the neighbourhood.

‡ Isa. xxxii. 2.

But most of all, in that *last tremendous* day, when the heavens are rent asunder, and wrapped up like a scroll; when thy Almighty arm shall arrest the sun in his career, and dash to pieces the structure of the universe; when the dead, both small and great, shall be gathered before the throne of thy glory, and the fates of all mankind hang on the very point of a final irreverfible decision:—Then, blessed JESUS, let us be owned by thee, and we shall not be *ashamed*; defended by thee, and we shall not be *afraid*. O! may we, at that awful, that unutterably important juncture, be covered with the wings of thy redeeming love; and we shall behold all the horrible convulsions of expiring nature with compofure, with comfort! We shall even welcome the diffolution of all things, as the “times of refreshing from the presence of the LORD.” *

There are, I perceive, who ftill attend the flowers; and, in defiance of the fun, ply their work on every expanded bloffom. The *bees*, I mean. That nation of chymifts; to whom nature has communicated the rare and valuable fecrets of enriching themfelves, without impoverifhing others; who extract the moft delicious fyrup from every fragrant herb, without wounding its fubftance, or diminifhing its odours.—I take the more notice of thefe ingenious operators, becaufe I would willingly make them my pattern. † While the gay *butterfly* flutters her painted wings, and fips a little fantaftic delight, only for the prefent moment; while the
gloomy

* Acts iii. 19.

* ——— *Ego apis matinae
More modique
Grataque carpentis thyma.*

Hor.

But like a bee, which thro' the breezing grove
With feeble wing and idle murmurs rove,
Sits on the bloom, and, with unceasing toils,
From thyme sweet-breathing culls his flow'ry fpoils.

gloomy *spider*, worse than idly busied, is preparing his insidious nets for destruction, or sucking venom even from the most wholesome plants: this frugal community are wisely employed in providing for futurity, and collecting a copious stock of the most balmy treasures.—And, O! might these meditations sink into my soul! would the God, who suggested each heavenly thought, vouchsafe to convert it into an *established principle*, to determine all my inclinations, and regulate my whole conduct; I should then gather advantages from the same blooming objects, more precious than your golden stores, ye industrious artists. I also should go home laden with the *richest sweets*, and the *noblest spoils*, though I crop not a leaf, nor call a single flower my own.

Here I behold, assembled in *one view*, almost all the various beauties, which have been severally entertaining my imagination. The *vistas*, struck thro' an ancient wood, or formed by rows of venerable elms; conducting the spectator's observation to some remarkable object; or leading the traveller's footsteps to this delightful seat:—The *walls*, enriched with fruit-trees, and faced with a covering of their leafy extensions; I should rather have said, hung with different pieces of nature's noblest tapestry:—the *walks*, neatly shorn, and lined with verdure; or finely smoothed, and coated with gravel:—the *alleys*, arched with shades, to embower our noon-tide repose; or thrown open for the free accession of air, to invite us to our evening-recreation?—the decent *edgings* of box, which inclose like a plain selvage, each beautiful compartment and its splendid figures:—the shapely *evergreens*, and *flowering shrubs*; which strike the eye, and appear with peculiar dignity, in this distant situation;—the *basin*, with its crystal fount, floating in the centre; and diffusing an agreeable freshness, through the whole:—the waters, falling from a remote *cascade*:

cade; and gently murmuring, as they flow along the pebbles:—*these*, added to the rest; and all so disposed, that each recommends and endears each; render the *whole* a most sweet ravishing scene, of order and variety, of elegance and magnificence.

From so many lovely prospects, clustering upon the sight, it is impossible not to be reminded of *heaven*: that world of bliss; those regions of light; where the Lamb that was slain manifests his beatific presence, and his saints live for evermore.—But O! what pencil can sketch out a draught of that goodly land! what colours, or what style, can express the splendors of IMMANUEL'S kingdom! Would some celestial hand draw aside the veil, but for one moment; and permit us to throw a single glance on those divine abodes; how would all sublunary possessions become tarnished in our eyes, and grow flat upon our taste! a glimpse, a transient glimpse of those unutterable beatitudes, would captivate our souls, and ingross all their faculties. *Eden* itself, after such a vision, would appear a cheerless *desert*; and all earthly charms, intolerable *deformity*.

Very “excellent things are spoken of thee, thou city of God.”* Volumes have been written, and those by inspired men, to display the wonders of thy perfections. All that is rich and resplendent in the visible creation, has been called in to aid our conceptions, and elevate our ideas. But, indeed, no tongue can utter; no pen can describe; no fancy can imagine, what GOD, of his unbounded munificence, has prepared for them that love him.—Seeing, that all terrestrial things must come to a speedy end; and there remaineth a rest, a blissful and everlasting rest, for the people of GOD; let me never be too fondly attached to any present satisfactions. Weaned from whatever is temporal,
may

* Psal. lxxxvii. 2.

may I maintain a superior indifference for such transitory enjoyments; but long, long earnestly, for the mansions that are above: the paradise, "which the LORD hath planted, and not man." Thither may I transmit the chief of my *conversation*; and from thence expect the whole of my *happiness*. Be that the sacred powerful magnet, which ever influences my heart; ever attracts my affections. *There*, are such transcendent glories, as eye has not seen: *there*, are such transporting pleasures, as ear has not heard: *there*, is such a fulness of joys, as the thought of man cannot conceive.

Into that consummate felicity, those eternal fructions, permit me, Madam, to wish you, in due time, an *abundant entrance*; and to assure you, that this wish is breathed with the same sincerity and ardour, for my honoured correspondent, as it is, MADAM, for

Your most obedient, &c

J. HERVEY.

A D E S C A N T
U P O N
C R E A T I O N.

“ With joy, with grief, that healing hand I see;

“ The *skies* it form'd, and yet it *bled* for me.”

Night-Thoughts, N. IV.

IF the reader pleases to look back on page 127, he will find me engaged by a *promissory* note, to subjoin a *DESCANT* upon *CREATION*.

To know the love of CHRIST; to have such a deep apprehension of his unspeakable kindness, as may produce in our hearts an adoring gratitude, and an unfeigned faith; this, according to St. Paul's estimate, is the highest and happiest attainment in the sacred science of Christianity.* What follows, is an attempt to assist the attentive mind, in learning a line or two of that best and greatest lesson. It introduces the most conspicuous parts of the visible system, as so many *prompters* to our dull affections; each suggesting a *hint*, adapted to the important occasion, and suited to its respective character.

Can there be a more powerful incentive to devout *gratitude*, than to consider the magnificent and delicate scenes of the universe, with a particular reference to CHRIST, as the Creator?—Every object, viewed in this light, will surely administer incessant

* Eph. iii. 19.

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incessant recruits, to the languishing lamp of divine love. Every production in nature, will strike a spark into the soul ; and the whole creation concur, to raise the smoking flax into a flame.

Can any thing impart a stronger *joy* to the believer, or more effectually confirm his *faith* in the crucified JESUS, than to behold the heavens declaring his glory, and the firmament shewing his handy work ? Surely, it must be matter of inexpressible consolation to the poor sinner, to observe the honours of his Redeemer, written with sun beams over all the face of the world.

We delight to read an account of our incarnate JEHOVAH, as he is revealed in the books of *Moses* and the prophets, as he is displayed in the writings of the evangelists and apostles. Let us also endeavour to see a sketch of his perfections, as they stand delineated in that stately volume, where every *leaf* is a spacious plain—every *line*, a flowing brook—every *period* a lofty mountain.

Should any of my readers be unexercised in such speculations, I beg leave (in pursuance of my promise) to present them with a *specimen*, or to offer a clue, which may possibly lead their minds, into this most improving and delightful train of thinking.

Should any be inclined to suspect the solidity of the following observations ; or to condemn them, as the voice of rant, and the lawless flight of fancy ; I must entreat such persons to recollect, that the grand doctrine, the hinge on which they all turn, is warranted and established by the unanimous testimony of the inspired penmen ; who frequently celebrate IMMANUEL, or CHRIST JESUS, as the great almighty cause of all ; assuring us, that “ all things were created by him, and for him ; and “ that in him all things consist.”*

On

* Col. i. 16, 17. Before my reader enters upon the following Descant, he is desired to peruse the note, p. 126, 127.

On such a subject, what is wonderful, is far from being *extravagant*. To be wonderful, is the inseparable characteristic of God and his works; especially, of that most distinguished and glorious even of the divine works, REDEMPTION: so glorious "that all the miracles in *Egypt*, and the "marvellous acts in the field of *Zaan*;" all that the *Jewish* annals have recorded, or the human ear has heard; all dwindle into *trivial events*, are scarce worthy to be *remembered*,* in comparison of this infinitely grand and infinitely gracious transaction.—Kindled, therefore, into pleasing astonishment, by such a survey, let me give full scope to my meditations. Let me pour out my whole soul on the boundless subject: not much regarding the limits, which cold criticism, or colder unbelief, might prescribe.

O ye *Angels*, that surround the throne; ye princes of Heaven, "that excel in strength," and are clothed with transcendent brightness; he, who placed you in those stations of exalted honour, and dignified your nature with such illustrious endowments; he, whom you all obey, and all adore: HE took not on him the angelic form, but was made flesh, and found in fashion as a man. Like us, wretched mortals, he was subject to weariness, pain, and every infirmity, sin only excepted.—That we might, one day, be raised to your sublime abodes; be adopted into your blissful society; and join with your transported choir, in giving glory to HIM that sitteth upon the throne, and to the LAMB for ever and ever.†

O ye *heavens*; whose azure arches rise immensely high, and stretch unmeasurably wide. Stupendous amphitheatre! amidst whose vast expansive circuit,

* orbs

* Isa. xliii. 18.

† Rev. v. 13.

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erbs of the most dreadful grandeur are perpetually running their amazing races. Unfathomable depths of æther! where worlds unnumbered float; and, to our limited sight, worlds unnumbered are lost. —He, who adjusted your dimensions with his span, and formed the magnificent structure with his word; HE was once wrapt in swaddling cloaths, and laid in a manger.—That the benefits accruing to his people, through his most meritorious humiliation, might have no other measure of their value than immensity; might run parallel, in their duration, with eternity.

Ye *stars*; that beam with inextinguishable brilliancy, through the midnight sky. Oceans of flame, and centres of worlds, though seemingly little points of light! —He, who shone, with essential effulgence, innumerable ages, before your twinkling tapers were kindled; and will shine with everlasting majesty and beauty, when your places in the firmament shall be known no more: He was involved, for many years, in the deepest obscurity; lay concealed in the contemptible city *Nazareth*; lay disguised under the mean habit of a carpenter's son.—That he might plant the heavens,* as it were, with new constellations: and array these clods of earth, these houses of clay, with a radiancy far superior to yours: a radiancy which will adorn the very heaven of heavens, when you shall vanish away like smoke;† or expire, as momentary sparks from the smitten steel.

Comets,

* *Isaiah li. 16.*

† Alluding to a passage in *Isaiah*, which is I think, grand and elevated beyond all comparison.—“Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath; for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die (like the feeble insect): But my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation shall not be abolished.” *Isa. li. 6.* —With the great *Vitrings*,
I translate

Comets, that sometimes shoot into the illimitable tracts of æther farther than the discernment of our eye is able to follow; sometimes return from the long, long excursion, and sweep our affrighted hemisphere with your enormous fiery train. That sometimes make near approaches to the sun, and burn almost in his immediate beams; sometimes retire to the remotest distance, and freeze, for ages, in the excessive rigours of winter. He who, at his sovereign pleasure, withdraws the blazing wonder; or leads forth the portentous stranger to shake terror over guilty kingdoms. HE was overwhelmed with the most shocking amazement, and plunged into the deepest anxiety; was chilled with apprehensions of fear, and scorched by the flames of avenging wrath.—That I, and other depraved rebellious creatures, might not be eternally agitated with the extremes of jarring passions; opposite, yet, on either side, tormenting; far more tormenting to the soul, than the severest degrees of your heat and cold to the human sense.

Ye Planets; that winged with unimaginable speed, traverse the regions of the sky. Sometimes climbing millions and millions of miles above, sometimes descending as far below, the great axle of your motions. Ye, that are so minutely faithful, to the vicissitudes of day and night; so exactly punctual, in bringing on the changes of your respective seasons.—He, who launched you, at first, from his mighty arm; who continually impels you, with such wonderful rapidity; and guides you with such perfect regularity. Who fixes “the habitation of his holiness and his glory,” infinite heights above your scanty rounds. HE once be-
came

I translate the words כְּכַמֹּר not, “in like manner;” but, “like the feeble insect.” Which renders the period more complete; the sense more emphatical; and is more agreeable to the genius of the sacred original.

came a helpless infant, sojourned in our inferior world; fled from the persecutor's sword; and wandered as a vagabond in a foreign land.—That he might lead our feet in the way of peace; that he might bring us aliens near to GOD, bring us exiles home to heaven.

Thou *sun*; inexhausted source of light, and heat, and comfort! Who, without the assistance of any other fire, sheddest day through a thousand realms; and, not confining thy munificence to realms only, extendest thy enlightening influences to surrounding worlds. Prime cheerer of the animal, and great enliverer of the vegetable tribes! So beautiful in thyself, so beneficial in thy effects, that erring Heathens addressed thee with adorations, and mistook thee for thy maker!—He, who filled thy orb with a profusion of lustre; before whom thy meridian splendors are but a shade.—HE divested himself of his all-transcending distinctions, and drew a veil over the effulgence of his divinity; that, by speaking to us, face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend, he might dispel our intellectual darkness. His “visage was marred,”* and he became the scorn of men, the outcast of the people; that, by this manifestation of his unutterably tender regard for our welfare, he might diffuse many a gleam of joy through our dejected minds. That, in another state of things, he might clothe even our fallen nature, with the honours of that magnificent luminary; and give all the righteous to shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father.

Thou *moon*; that walkest amongst the host of stars, and, in thy lucid appearance, art superior to them all. Fair ruler of the night! Sometimes half-

* Isaiah lii. 14.

half restoring the day, with thy waxing brightness; sometimes waning into dimness, and scarcely scattering the nocturnal gloom; sometimes covered with sackcloth, and alarming the gazing nations.—He, who dresses thy opaque globe, in beaming, but borrowed silver; he, whose dignity is unchangeable, underived, and all his own; he vouchsafed to wear a body of clay. HE was content to appear as in a bloody eclipse, shorn of his resplendent beams, and surrounded with a night of horror, which knew not one reviving ray.—Thus has he impowered his church, and believers, to tread the moon under their feet.* Hence, inspired with the hope of brighter glory, and of more enduring bliss, are they enabled to triumph over all the vain anxieties, and vainer amusements, of this sublunary precarious, mutable world.

Ye *thunders*; that awfully grumbling in the distant clouds, seem to meditate indignation, and form the first essays of a far more frightful peal; or, suddenly bursting over our head, rend the vault above, and shake the ground below, with the hideous, horrid crack. Ye that send your tremendous volleys from pole to pole, startling the savage herds,† and astonishing the human race.—He, who permits Terror to sound her trumpet, in you deep, prolonged, enlarging, aggravated roar: HE uttered a feeble infantile cry in the stable, and strong expiring groans on the accursed tree.—That he might, in the gentlest accents, whisper peace to our souls; and, at length, tune our voices to the melody of heaven.

O ye *lightnings*; that brood, and lie couchant, in the sulphureous vapours; that glance with forked fury, from the angry gloom, swifter and fiercer
than.

* Rev. xii. 1.

† Psal. xxix. 8.

than the lion rushes from his den; or open into vast expansive sheets of flame, sublimely waved over the prostrate world, and fearfully lingering in the frightened skies. Ye that formerly laid in ashes the licentious abodes of lust and violence; that will, ere long, set on fire the elements, and co-operate in the conflagration of the globe.—He, who kindles your flash, and directs you when to fall and where to strike; He, who commissions your whirling bolts, whom to kill, and whom to spare: HE resigned his sacred person to the most barbarous indignities; submitted his beneficent hands to the ponderous hammer, and the piercing nail; yea, withheld not his heart, his very heart, from the stab of the executioner's spear. And, instead of flashing confusion on his outrageous tormentors; instead of plunging them to the depths of hell with his frown; He cried in his last moments, and with his agonizing lips, He cried; FATHER, FORGIVE THEM; FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO!—O! what a pattern of patience for his saints! what an object of admiration for angels! what a constellation of every mild, amiable, and benign virtue; shining, in this hour of darkness, with ineffable splendor and beauty! *

—Hence,

* One can hardly forbear animadverting upon the *disingenuous* temper, and perverse taste of Celsus; who attempts to turn this most distinguishing and ornamental part of our Lord's life, into ridicule and reproach.—Having spoken of Christ as despitely used, and arrayed in a purple robe; crowned with thorns, and holding, by way of mock-majesty, a reed instead of a sceptre, (for he enters into all these circumstances, which is a testimony to their truth even from the mouth of an enemy), he adds—Τὴν οὖν, εἰ μὴ

προσθεν αλλα νυν γαρ θειον τι επιδεικνυται; καὶ τῆς αἰχμῆς ταυ-
της εαυλον ρυσαι, καὶ τῶς ὑβριζούσας εἰς εαυλον τε καὶ τον πατέρα
δικαιει; Orig. contra Cels. p. 81. i. e. "Why, in the name of
"wonder does he not, on this occasion, at least, act the God?
"Why does he not deliver himself from this shocking ignominy;
"or execute some signal vengeance on the authors of such inju-
"rious and abusive insults, both of himself and his Father?"—

Why

—Hence, hence it is, that we are not trembling under the lightnings of mount *Sinai*; that we are not blasted by the flames of divine vengeance; or doomed to dwell with everlasting burnings.

Ye frowning *wintry clouds*; oceans pendent in the air, and burdening the winds. He in whose hand you are an overflowing scourge; or, by whose appointment, an arsenal of warlike stores.* He who opens your sluices, and a flood gushes forth; to destroy the fruits of the earth, and drown the husband-

Why, Celsus? because HE was meekness and gentleness itself: whereas *your* deities were slaves to their own turbulent and resentful passions. Because *they* were little better than savages in human shape; who too often made a merit of slaughter, and took a horrid pride in spilling blood. While CHRIST was the Prince of peace, and came not to destroy mens lives, but to save. Because any mad-man on earth, or fury from hell, is capable of venting his rage. But who among such unsufferable provocations and barbarities; who, having in his own hand the power to rescue himself, the power to avenge himself; could submit to all with an unruffled serenity of patience, and not only not be exasperated, but *overcome*, in so triumphant a manner, *evil with good*? None but CHRIST! none but CHRIST! This was compassion worthy of a GOD; clemency and charity *truly divine*.

Therefore the calumny raised by the same virulent objector, in another place, carries its own confutation: or rather, falls with a weight of *infamy* on his dung-hill deities; while it bears a most *honourable* testimony to the majestic and invincible meekness of our Saviour.—Συ μὲν, says he to the Christian, τα ἀγάλματα τῶν λαιδῶρων καλῶμελας, ο; αὐλον γε τον Διονυσου η τον Ηρακλεια παροντα ει ελαιοδρησας, εκ αν ισω; χαιρων απηλλαξας τον γε τον Θεον παροντα καλαλειωνες κ' καλαζονες, εδεν οι ταυτα δεσσαντις; πεποιθασιν, *ibid.* p. 404. i. e. “You, indeed, take upon “you to deride the images of our deities: but if Bacchus himself, “or Hercules, had been present, you would not have dared to offer such an affront; or, if you had been so presumptuous, would “have severely smarted for your insolence. Whereas, they who “tormented the very person of your GOD, and even extended “him with mortal agony on the cross, suffered no effects of his “displeasure.”

* Juvenal seems to consider the clouds under this same character, in that beautiful line:

Quicquid habent telorum armamentaria cœli.

Sat. 13.

By all the magazines of wrath above.

husbandman's hopes : who moulds you into frozen balls, and you are shot, linked with death, * on the troops of his enemies. He, instead of discharging the furiousness of his wrath upon this guilty head ; poured out his prayers ? poured out his sighs ; poured out his very soul, for me and my fellow transgressors.—That, by virtue of his inestimable propitiation, the overflowings of divine good-will might be extended to sinful men ; that the skies might pour down righteousness ; and ; peace on her downy wings, peace with her balmy blessings, descend to dwell on earth.

Ye *vernal clouds* ; furs of finer air, folds of softer moisture. He, who draws you in copious exhalations, from the briny deep ; bids you leave every distasteful quality behind ; and become floating fountains of sweetest waters. He, who dissolves you into gentle rain, and dismisses you in fruitful showers ; who kindly commissions you, to drop down fatness, as you fall ; and to scatter flowers over the field.—HE, in the unutterable bitterness of his spirit, was without any comforting sense of his Almighty Father's presence. He, when his bones were burnt up like a firebrand, had not one drop of that sacred consolation, which, on many of his afflicted servants, has been distilled as the evening dews, and has " given songs in the " night " of distress.—That, from this unallayed and

* Job has informed us, for what purpose the magazines of the firmament are stocked with hail. That they may be ready " against " the day of battle and war." Job xxxviii. 23.—Joshua has recorded, what terrible slaughter has been made by those *missive weapons* of the Almighty, Josh. x. 11.—Modern historians relate, that, when Edward III. invaded France, a shower of hailstones descended, of such a prodigious size, that six thousand horses, and one thousand men, were struck dead instantaneously.—But the most dreadful description of this *great ordnance* of the heavens, is given us in Rev. xvi. 21. " There fell upon men a great hail out " of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent."

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and inconsoleable anguish of our all-gracious master, we, as from a well of salvation, might derive large draughts of spiritual refreshment.

Thou grand *ethereal bow*; whose beauties flush the firmament, and charm every spectator. He who paints thee on the fluid skirts of the sky; who decks thee with all the pride of colours; and bends thee into that graceful and majestic figure. At whose command, thy vivid streaks sweetly rise, or swiftly fade.—HE, through all his life, was arrayed in the humble garb of poverty; and, at his exit, wore the gorgeous garment of contempt. In-
somuch, that even his own familiar friends, ashamed or afraid to own him, “hid as it were their faces from him.”*—To teach us a becoming disdain, for the unsubstantial and transitory glitter of all worldly vanities. To introduce us, in robes brighter than the tinges of thy resplendent arch, even in the robes of his own immaculate righteousness, to introduce us before that august and venerable throne, which the peaceful rainbow surrounds; surrounds, as a pledge of inviolable fidelity, and infinite mercy.

Ye *storms and tempests*, which vex the continent, and toss the seas! which dash navies on the rocks, and drive forests from the roots. He, whose breath rouses you into such resistless fury, and whose nod controls you into your wildest career. He, who holds the rapid and raging hurricane in straitened reins; and walks, dreadfully serene, on the very wings of the wind. HE went, all meek and gentle, like a lamb to the slaughter for us; and, as a sheep
before

* Isa. liii. 2. כְּאֶחָד מִן הַנְּשִׁים הָיָה Fuit tanquam aliquis, a quo quisque faciem occultaret. “He was as some” flagitious and “abandoned” wretch, from whom every one,” disdaining such a character, and disclaiming such an acquaintance, studiously “hid his face.”

before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.—Thus, are we instructed, to bear, with decent magnanimity, the various assaults of adversity; and to pass, with a becoming tranquility of temper, through all the rude blasts of injurious treatment. Thus are we delivered from the unutterably fiercer storms of incensed and inexorable justice; from the “fire, the brimstone, and the “horrible tempest, which will be the final portion “of the ungodly.”

Thou *Pestilence*, that scatterest ten thousand poisons from thy baleful wings; tainting the air, and infecting the nations. Under whose malignant influence, joy is blasted, and nature sickens; mighty regions are depopulated, and once crowded cities are left without inhabitants. He, who arms thee with inevitable destruction, and bids thee march before his angry countenance;* to spread desolation among the tents of the wicked, and be the forerunner of far more fearful indignation. HE, in his holy humanity, was arraigned as a criminal; and, though innocence itself, yea, the very pattern of perfection, was condemned to die, like the most execrable miscreant. As a nuisance to society and the very bane of the public happiness, he was hurried away to execution, and hammered to the gibbet.—That, by his blood, he might prepare a sovereign medicine, to cure us of a more fatal distemper, than the pestilence which walketh in darkness; or the sickness which destroyeth at noon-day. That he might himself say to our last enemy, “O death, “I will be thy plague; O grave, I will be thy destruction.”†

Heat: whose burning influence parches the *Libyan* wilds; tans into soot, the *Ethiopian's* complexion;

* “Before him went the pestilence.” Hab. iii. 5.

† Hof. xiii. 14.

plexion ; and makes every species of life pant, and droop, and languish. *Cold*, whose icy breath glazes yearly the *Russian* seas ; often glues the frozen sailor to the cordage ; and stiffens the traveller into a statue of rigid flesh.—HE, who sometimes blends you both, and produces the most agreeable temperature ; sometimes suffers you to act separately, and rage with intolerable severity. That King of heaven, and controler of universal nature, when dwelling in a tabernacle of clay, was exposed to chilling damps, and smitten by sultry beams. The stars, in their midnight watches, heard him pray ; and the sun, in his meridian fervours, saw him toil, —Hence are our frozen hearts dissolved into a mingled flow of wonder, love and joy ; being conscious of a deliverance from those insufferable flames, which, kindled by divine indignation, burn to the lowest hell.

Thou *ocean*, vast world of waters ! He, who sunk that capacious bed for thy reception, and poured the liquid element into unfathomable channels ; before whom, all thy foaming billows, and floating mountains, are as the small drop of a bucket. Who, by the least intimation of his will, swells thy fluid kingdoms, in wild confusion, to mingle with the clouds ; or reduces them, in calm composure, to slumber on the shores. He, who once gave thee a warrant to overwhelm the whole earth, and bury all its degenerate inhabitants in a watery grave ; but has, now, laid an everlasting embargo on thy boisterous waves ; and bound thee, all fierce and madding as thou art, in chains stronger than adamant, yet formed of despicable sand.—All the waves of vengeance and wrath, of tribulation and anguish, passed over HIS crucified body, and his agonizing soul. That we might emerge from those depths of misery, from that abyss of guilt into which we were plunged by

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Adam's fall, and more irretrievably sunk by our own transgressions. That, at the last, we might be restored to that happy world, which is represented, in the vision of GOD, as having no sea ; * to denote its perpetual stability, and undisturbed serenity.

Ye *mountains*, that overlook the clouds, and project a shade into distant provinces. Everlasting pyramids of nature, not to be shaken by conflicting elements ; not to be shattered by the bolts of thunder ; nor impaired even by the ravages of time.——HE, who bid your ridges rise so high, and your foundations stand so fast. He, in whose scale, you are lighter than dust ; in whose eye, you are less than nothing.——HE sunk beneath a load of woes ; woes insupportable ; but not his own ; when he took our iniquities upon himself, and heaved the more than mountainous burden from a guilty world.

Ye verdant *woods*, that crown our hills, and are crowned yourselves with leafy honours. Ye humble *shrubs*, adorned, in spring, with opening blossoms ; and fanned, in summer, by gentle gales. Ye, that in distant climes, or in cultivated gardens, breathe out spicy odours, and embalm the air with delightful perfumes.—Your all-glorious and ever-blessed Creator's head was encircled with the thorny wreath ; his face was defiled with contumelious spitting ; and his body bathed in a bloody sweat. That we might wear the crown, the crown of glory, which fadeth not away ; and live for evermore, surrounded with delights, as much surpassing yours, as yours exceed the rugged desolations of winter.

Thou

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Thou mantling *vine* ; he who hangs on thy slender shoots, the rich, transparent, weighty cluster. Who, under the unornamented foliage, and amidst the pores of thy otherwise worthless bough, prepares the liquor,—the refined and exalted liquor, which cheers the nations, and fills the cup of joy. *Trees*, whose branches are elevated and waving in air ; or diffused, in easy confinement, along a sunny wall. He, who bends you with a lovely burthen of delicious fruits ; whose genial warmth beautifies their rind, and mellows their taste.—HE, when voluntarily subject to our wants, instead of being refreshed with your generous juices, or regaled with your luscious pulp ; had a loathsome potion of vinegar, mingled with gall, addressed to his lips.—That we might sit under the shadow of his merits, with great tranquillity, and the utmost complacency. That, ere long, being admitted into the Paradise of GOD, we might eat of the tree of life ; * and drink new wine with him in his Father's kingdom.

Ye luxuriant *meadows* ; he who, without the seedsman's industry, replenishes your irriguous lap, with never failing crops of herbage ; and enamels their cheerful green, with flowers of every hue.—Ye fertile *fields* ; he who blesses the labours of the husbandman ; enriches your well-tilled plains with waving harvests, and calls forth the staff of life from your furrows. He, who causes both meadows and fields to laugh and sing, for the abundance of plenty.—HE was no stranger to corroding hunger, and parching thirst. He, alas ! ate the bitter bread of woe, and had “ plenteousness of tears to drink.”—That we might partake of richer dainties, than those which are produced by the dew of heaven, and proceed from
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* Rev. ii. 7.

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the fatness of the earth. That we might feed on "the hidden manna," and eat the bread which giveth life, eternal life, unto the world.

Ye *mines*, rich in yellow ore, or bright with veins of silver; that distribute your shining treasures, as far as winds can waft the vessel of commerce, that bestow your alms on monarchs, and have princes for your pensioners—Ye beds of *gems*, toy-shops of nature! which form, in dark retirement, the glittering stone. *Diamonds*, that sparkle with a brilliant water; *rubies*, that glow with a crimson flame: *emeralds*, dipped in the freshest verdure of spring; *sapphires*, decked with the fairest drapery of the sky; *topaz*, emblazed with a golden gleam; *amethyst*, impurpled with the blushes of the morning.—He, who tinctures the metallic dust, and consolidates the lucid drop; HE, when sojourning on earth, had no riches, but the riches of disinterested benevolence; had no ornament, but the ornament of unspotted purity. Poor he was in his circumstances, and mean in all his accommodations; that WE might be rich in grace, and "obtain salvation with eternal glory." That we might inhabit the new *Jerusalem*: that splendid city! whose streets are paved with gold; whose gates are formed of pearl; and the walls garnished with all manner of precious stones.*

Ye gushing *fountains*, that trickle potable silver through the matted grass. Ye fine transparent *streams*, that glide, in crystal waves, along your fringed banks. Ye deep and stately *rivers*, that wind and wander in your course, to spread your favours wider; that gladden kingdoms in your progress, and augment the sea with your tribute.—He, who supplies all your currents, from his

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own ever-flowing and inexhaustible liberality: HE, when his nerves were racked with exquisite pain, and his blood inflamed by a raging fever, cried, I THIRST; and was denied (unparalleled hardship.) in this his great extremity, was denied the poor refreshment of a single drop of water.—That we, having all-sufficiency in all things, might abound to every good work; might be filled with the fulness of spiritual blessings here, and hereafter be satisfied with that fulness of joy, which is at God's right hand for ever more.

Ye *birds*, cheerful tenants of the boughs, gaily dressed in glossy plumage; who wake the morn, and solace the groves, with your artless lay. Inimitable architects! who, without rule or line, build your pensile structures, with all the nicety of proportion. You have each his commodious nest, roofed with shades, and lined with warmth, to protect and cherish the callow brood.—But he, who tuned your throats to harmony, and taught you that curious skill; HE was a man of sorrows, and had not where to lay his head; had not where to lay his head, till he felt the pangs of dissolution, and was laid in the silent grave.—That we, dwelling under the wings of Omnipotence, and resting in the bosom of infinite love, might spend an harmonious eternity, in “singing the song of *Moses*, “and of the LAMB.”

Bees, industrious workmen! that sweep, with busy wing, the flowery garden; and search the blooming heath; and sip the mellifluous dews. Strangers to idleness! that ply, with incessant assiduity, your pleasing task; and suffer no opening blossom to pass unexplored, no sunny gleam to slip away unimproved. Most ingenious artificers! that cling to the fragrant buds; drain them of their treasured sweets! and extract (if I may so speak) even the odoriferous souls of herbs, and plants,
and

and flowers.—You, when you have completed your work; have collected, refined, and securely lodged the ambrosial stores; when you might reasonably expect the peaceful fruition of your acquisitions; you, alas! are barbarously destroyed, and leave your hoarded delicacies to others; leave them to be enjoyed by your very murderers. I cannot but pity your hard destiny!—How then should my bowels melt with sympathy, and my eyes flow with tears; * when I remember, that *thus, thus* it fared with your and our incarnate Maker! After a life of the most exemplary and exalted piety; a life, filled with offices of beneficence, and labours of love; HE was, by wicked hands, crucified and slain. He left the honey of his toil, the balm of his blood, and the riches of his obedience, to be shared among others; to be shared even among those, who too often crucify him afresh, and put him to open shame.

Shall I mention the animal,† which *spins her* soft, her shining, her exquisitely fine *silken* thread? whose

* Canst thou, ungrateful man, his torments see,
Nor drop a tear for him, who *pour'd* his blood for thee?

Pitt's Poems.

† No one, I hope, will be offended at my introducing, on *such* an occasion, creatures of so low a rank. Since even the volumes of inspiration seem to lend me the sanction of their sacred authority. As they disdain not to compare the blessed JESUS to a *door*, a *highway*, &c. And, perhaps, all comparisons which respect a being of *infinite* dignity, are not only mean, but *equally* mean and unworthy.

I am sensible, likewise, that in this paragraph, and some others, *all* the circumstances are not completely correspondent. But if, in *some* grand particulars, the reddition answers to the description, this, I trust, will be sufficient for my purpose, and satisfactory to my readers.—Perhaps it would be no mistaken caution, to apply the same observation to many of the beautiful similitudes, parables, and allegories, used by our LORD: such as the *brazen serpent*, the *unjust steward*, the *thief* in the night, &c. Which, if scrupulously sifted, or rigorously strained, for an entire coincidence in *every* circumstance, must appear to great disadvantage, and lead into palpable inconveniencies.

whose matchless manufactures lend an ornament to grandeur, and make royalty itself more magnificent.—Shall I take notice of the cell, in which, when the gaiety and business of life are over, the little recluse immures herself, and spends the remainder of her days in retirement?—Shall I rather observe the sepulchre, which, when cloyed with pleasure and weary of the world, she prepares for her own interment? or how, when a stated period is elapsed, she wakes from a death-like inactivity; breaks the inclosure of her tomb; throws off the dusky shroud; assumes a new form; puts on a more sumptuous array; and, from an insect creeping on the ground, becomes a winged inhabitant of the air?—No: this is a poor *reptile*; and therefore unworthy to serve as an illustration, when any character of the Son of GOD comes under consideration. But let me correct myself. Was not CHRIST (to use the language of his own blessed Spirit) “a worm and no man?”* In appearance such, and treated as such.—Did he not also bequeath the fine linen of his own most perfect righteousness, to compose the marriage-garment † for

* Psal. xxii. 6.

† This, and several other hints interspersed in the two volumes, refer to the *active* and *passive* righteousness of CHRIST, *imputed* to believers for their justification. Which in the opinion of many great expositors, is the mystical and the most sublime meaning of the *wedding-garment*, so emphatically and forcibly recommended by the teacher sent from GOD, Matth. xxii. 11. A doctrine which some of those who honour my meditations with a perusal, probably may not receive with much, if any approbation. I hope the *whole* performance will not be cashiered for *one* difference in sentiment. And I beg that the sentiment itself may not hastily be rejected, without a serious hearing. For I have the pleasure of being intimately acquainted with a gentleman of good learning and distinguished sense, who had *once* as strong prepossessions *against* this tenet as can well be imagined. Yet *now*, he not only admits it, as a truth; but embraces it as the joy of his heart, and cleaves to it as the rock of his hopes.

A clear and cogent treatise, entitled, “Submission to the Righteousness of GOD,” was the instrument of removing his prejudi-

for our disarrayed and defiled souls? Did he not, before his flesh saw corruption, emerge triumphant from the grave; and not only mount the lower firmament, but ascend the heaven of heavens; taking possession of those sublime abodes, in our name, and as our forerunner?

Ye *cattle*, that rest in your inclosed pastures; ye *beasts*, that range the unlimited forest; ye *fish*, that
rove

ces and reducing him to a better judgment.——In which he has been happily confirmed by the authority of the most *illustrious* names, and the works of the most eminent pens that have ever adorned our church and nation. In this number are Bishop Jewel, one of our great reformers; and the other venerable compilers of our homilies—Archbishop Usher, that oracle of universal learning—Bishop Hall, the devout and sprightly orator of his age—the copious and fervent Bishop Hopkins—the singularly good and unaffected Bishop Beveridge—that everlasting honour of the bench of judicature, Lord Chief Justice Hales—the nervous, florid and persuasive Dean Stanhope—the practical and perspicuous Mr. Burkit——and, to summon no other evidence, that *matchless* genius Milton; who, in various parts of his divine poem, inculcates this *comfortable* truth; and, in *one* passage, represents it under the very same image which is made use of above, Book X. l. 222.

I had almost forgot to mention, that the treatise entitled, *Submission, &c.* was written by Mr. Benjamin Jenks. Whose book of *devotions* has deservedly passed through *eleven* editions; is truly admirable for the sublimity, spirituality, and propriety of the sentiments, as well as for the concise form and pathetic turn of the expression.——Whose book of *meditations*, though no less worthy of general acceptance, has, for a considerable time, been almost unknown and extinct; but is now revived, and is lately republished, in two octavo volumes, by Mr. James Rivington. For which service, he has my thanks: I flatter myself he will have the thanks of the public; as I am persuaded, could religion and virtue speak, he would have their acknowledgments also. Since few treatises are more happily calculated to represent religion in its native beauty, and to promote the interests of genuine virtue.—On which account, I trust, the *candid* will excuse me, and the *judicious* will not condemn me, even though the recommendation of those devotions, and of these meditations, may appear to be a digression from my subject.

N. B. Should the reader be inclined to examine the afore-mentioned *tenet*, he will find it stated, discussed, and applied to its due improvement, in a piece entitled *Theron and Aspasio*, written by Mr. Hervey.

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rove through trackless paths of the sea. *Sheep*, clad in garments, which, when left by you, are wore by kings. *Kine*, who feed on verdure, which, transmuted in your bodies, and strained from your udders, furnishes a repast for queens. *Lions*, roaring after your prey; *Leviathan*, taking, your pastime in the great deep; with all that wing the firmament, or tread the soil, or swim the wave.—He, who spreads his ever hospitable board; who admits you all to be his continual guests; and suffers you to want no manner of thing that is good:—HE was destitute, afflicted, tormented: he endured all that was miserable and reproachful: in order to exalt a degenerate race, who had debased themselves to a level with the beasts that perish, unto seats of distinguished and immortal honour; in order to introduce the slaves of sin, and heirs of hell, into mansions of consummate and everlasting bliss.

Surely, the contemplation of such a subject, and the distant anticipation of such a hope, may almost turn earth into heaven, and make even inanimate nature vocal with praise. Let it, then, break forth from every creature. Let the *meanest* feel the inspiring impulse; let the *greatest* acknowledge themselves unable, worthily to express the stupendous goodness.

Praise HIM, ye *insects* that crawl on the ground; who, though high above all height, humbled himself to dwell in dust. *Birds* of the air, waft on your wings, and warble in your notes, HIS praise; who, though LORD of the celestial abodes, while sojourning on earth, wanted a shelter commodious as your nests.—Ye rougher world of *brutes*, join with the gentle songsters of the shade, and howl to HIM your hoarse applause; who break the jaw-bones of the infernal lion; who softens into mildness the savage disposition; and bids the wolf
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lie down, in amicable agreement, with the lamb. *Bleat* out, ye hills; let broader *lows* be responsive from the vales; ye forests catch, and ye rocks retain, the inarticulate hymn; because MESSIAH the Prince "feeds his flock, like a shepherd. He gathers the lambs with his arm; he carries them in his bosom; and gently leads those that are with young."—Wave, ye stately *cedars*, in sign of worship, wave your branching heads to HIM, who meekly bowed his own, on the accursed tree. Pleasing *prospects*, scenes of beauty, where nicest art conspires with lavish nature, to form a paradise below; lay forth all your charms, and in all your charms confess yourselves a mere blank; compared with his amiableness, who is "fairest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely."—Drop down, ye *showers*; and testify, as you fall; testify of HIS grace, which descends more copiously than the rain, distils more sweetly than the dew. Let sighing *gales* breathe, and murmuring *rivulets* flow; breathe and flow in harmonious consonance to him; whose Spirit is far more reviving, than the cooling breeze; who is himself the fountain of living waters.

Ye *lightnings*, blaze to his honour; ye *thunders*, sound HIS praise; while reverberating *clouds* return the roar, and bellowing *oceans* propagate the tremendous anthem.—*Mute*st of creatures, add your silent oratory, and display the triumphs of HIS meekness; who, though he maketh the clouds his chariot, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea; though the thunder is his voice, and the lightning his sword of justice: yet, amidst the most abusive and cruel injuries, was submissive and lifted not his hand, was "dumb and opened not his mouth."—Great *source of day*, address thy radiant homage

mage to a far sublimer sun. Write, in all thy ample round, with every lucid beam, O ! write a testimony to HIM, who is the brightness of his Father's glory : who is the sun of righteousness to a sinful world ; and is risen, never to go down ; is risen to be our everlasting light.—Shine clear, ye *skies* ; look gay, thou *earth* ; let the *floods* clap their hands, and let *every* creature wear a smile : for he cometh, the CREATOR himself cometh, to be manifested in the flesh ; and with him comes pardon, peace, and joy ; every virtue, and all felicity comes in his train.—*Angels* and *archangels*, let your songs be of JESUS, and teach the very heavens to echo with his adored and majestic name, Ye beheld him, with greater transports of admiration, when you attended his agony in the garden, and saw him prostrate on the ground ; than when you beheld universal nature rising at his call, and saw the wonders of his creating might. Tune to loftiest notes your golden harps, and waken raptures, unknown before even in heavenly breasts : while all that has *breath*, swells the concert of harmony ; and all that has *being*, unites in the tribute of praise.

Chiefly, let *man* exalt his voice ; let man, with distinguished hosannas, hail the REDEEMER. For man, he was stretched on the racking cross ; for man, he was consigned to the gloomy sepulchre ; for man, he procured grace unmeasurable and bliss inconceivable—However *different*, therefore, in your age, or more different in your circumstances, be *unanimous*, O men, in magnifying a Saviour, who is no respecter of persons ; who gave himself a ransom for all.—Bend, ye *kings*, from your thrones of ivory and gold ; in your robes of imperial purple, fall prostrate at HIS feet ; who, forsook a nobler throne, and laid aside more illustrious ensigns of majesty, that you might reign with GOD for ever and ever.—*Children* of *poverty*,
meanest

meanest of mortals, (if any can be called poor, who are *thus* enriched; if any can be accounted mean, who are *thus* ennobled;) rejoice, greatly rejoice, in GOD your Saviour; who chose to be indigent, was willing to be contemned, that you might be entitled to the treasures, and be numbered with the princes of heaven.—*Sons of affliction*, though harassed with pain, and inured to anguish, O! change your groans into songs of gratitude. Let no complaining voice, no jarring string be heard, in the universal symphony; but *glorify* the LAMB even *in the fires*; * who himself bore greater torment than you feel, and has promised you a share in the joy which he inherits: who has made your sufferings short, and will make your rest eternal.——

Men of hoary locks, bending beneath a weight of years, and tottering on the brink of the grave; let CHRIST be your support, under all infirmities; lean upon CHRIST, as the rock of your salvation. Let his name, his precious name, form the last accents which quiver on your pale expiring lips.—— And let this be the first that lisps on your tongues, ye tender *infants*. Remember your REDEEMER in your earliest moments. Devote the choice of your hours to the learning of his will, and the chief of your strength to the glorifying of HIS name; who, in the perfection of health, and the very prime of manhood, was content to become a motionless and ghastly corpse; that you might be girt with the vigour, and clothed with the bloom, of eternal youth.

Ye *spirits* of *just* men made *perfect*, who are released from the burden of the flesh; and freed from all the vexatious sollicitations of corruption in yourselves; delivered from the injurious effects of iniquity in others: Who sojourn no longer in the
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* Isaiah xxiv. 15.

the tents of strife, or the territories of disorder ; but are received into that pure, harmonious, holy society, where every one acts up to his amiable and exalted character ; where GOD himself is pleased *graciously and immediately* to preside.—You find, not without pleasing astonishment, your hopes improved into actual enjoyment, and your faith superseded by the beatific vision. You feel all your former shyness of behaviour happily lost, in the overflowings of unbounded love ; and all your little differences of opinion entirely bore down, by tides of invariable truth. Bless, therefore, with all your enlarged powers, bless *his* infinitely larger goodness ; who, when he had overcome the sharpness of death, opened the gates of paradise, opened the kingdom of heaven to all generations, and to every denomination of the faithful.

Ye men of *holy* conversation and *humble* tempers, think of HIM who *loved you, and washed you from your sins in his own blood*. Think of him on your silent couch, talk of him in every social interview. Glory in his excellencies, make your boast of his obedience ; and add, still continue to add, the incense of a dutiful life, to all the oblations of a grateful tongue.—*Weakest* of believers, who go mourning under a sense of guilt, and conflicting with the ceaseless assaults of temptation ; put off your sackcloth, and be girded with gladness. Because JESUS is as merciful to hear, as he is mighty to help. Because he is touched with the tenderest sympathising concern for all your distresses ; and he lives, ever lives, to be your *advocate* with the FATHER. Why then should uneasy doubts sadden your countenances ? why should desponding fears oppress your souls ? Turn, turn those disconsolate sighs into cheerful hymns ; since you have his *powerful intercession*, and his *inestimable merits*, to be your anchor in all tribulations, to be your passport into eternal blessedness.

Most

Most of all, ye *ministers* of the *sanctuary*; heralds commissioned from above; lift, every one, his voice like a trumpet, and loudly proclaim the REDEEMER. Get ye up, ye ambassadors of peace, get ye up into the high mountains, and spread far and wide the honours of the LAMB, "that was slain, "but is alive for evermore." Teach every sacred roof to resound with his fame; and every human heart to glow with his love. Declare, as far as the force of words will go, declare the inexhaustible fulness of that great atonement; whose merits are commensurate with the glories of the DIVINITY.* Tell the sinful wretch, what pity yearns in IMMANUEL's bowels; what blood he has spilt, what agonies he has endured, what wonders he has wrought, for the salvation of his enemies. Invite the indigent to become rich; entreat the guilty to accept of pardon; because, with the crucified JESUS is plenteous redemption, and all-sufficiency to save.—While you, placed in conspicuous stations, pour the joyful sound; may I, as I steal through the vale of humble

* If in this place and others, I have spoken magnificently of the blood of CHRIST, and its insuperable efficacy to expiate guilt; I think it is no more than is expressed in a very celebrated hymn, written by one of the greatest *wits*, who had also been one of the greatest *libertines*, and afterwards commenced done of the most remarkable *penitents*, in France. A hymn which even Mr. Bayle confesses to be a *very fine* one; which another great critic calls an *abominable* one; and which a genius, superior to them both, recommends as a *noble* one. See *Sp. Et.* Vol. vii. No. 513.

The author, having acknowledged his crimes to be beyond measure heinous, and almost beyond forgiveness provoking;—so provoking, as to render tears from such eyes offensive, and prayers from such lips abominable:—composes himself to submit, without the least repining sentiment; to submit, even with praise and adoration, to the most dreadful doom. Accordingly, he stands in resigned expectation of being instantly struck by the bolts of vengeance:—But, with a turn of thought equally surprising and sprightly; with a faith properly founded, and happily firm, he adds,

"Yet where! O where! *can* ev'n thy thunders fall?

"CHRIST's blood o'erspreads and shields me from them *all*."

humble life, catch the pleasing accents! For *me*, the author of all blessings became a curse: For *me*, his bones were dislocated, and his flesh was torn: He hung, with streaming veins, and an agonizing soul, on the cross, for *me*. O! may I, in my little sphere, and amidst the scanty circle of my acquaintance, at least whisper these glad transporting tidings; whisper them from my own heart, that they may surely reach, and sweetly penetrate theirs.

But, when men and angels raise the grand hymn; when all worlds, and all beings, add their collective acclamations; this full, fervent, and universal chorus, will be so *inferior* to the riches of the REDEEMER'S *grace*; so *disproportionate* to the magnificence of his glory; that it will seem but to *debase* the unutterable subject it attempts to exalt. The loud hallelujah will *die away*, in the solemn mental eloquence of prostrate, rapturous, *silent* adoration.

“ O Goodness infinite! Goodness immense!

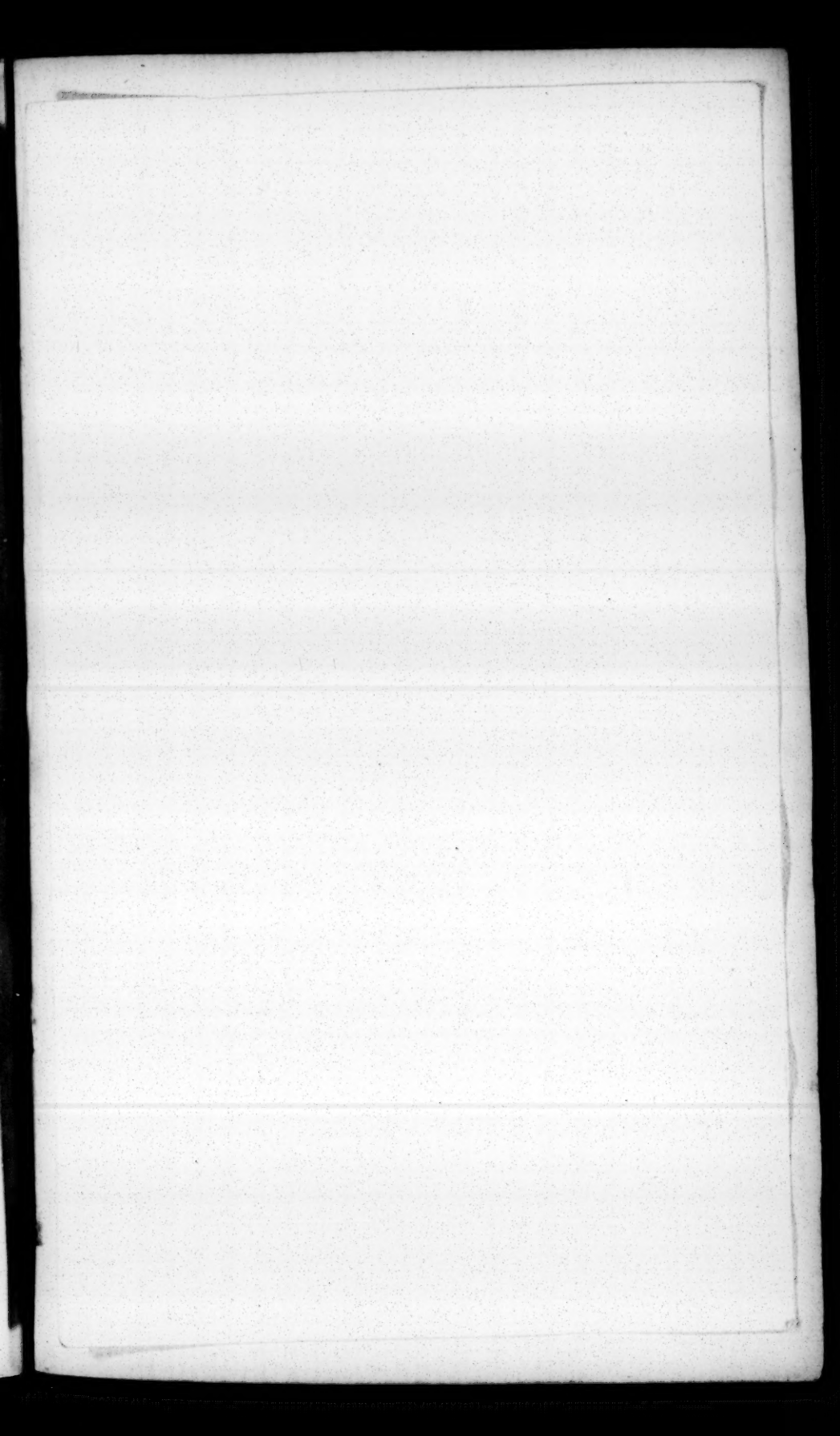
“ And *Love that passeth knowledge*! Words are vain;

“ Language is lost in wonders so divine:

“ *Come then, expressive SILENCE, muse his praise.*”

The END of the FIRST VOLUME.

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